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ますます人気の第4巻!!

カバーデザイン/上田　敬
カバーイラスト/秋乃茉莉

眠れぬ夜の奇妙な話コミックス

新 Petshop of Horrors 4

新ペットショップ オブ ホラーズ

秋乃茉莉

朝日ソノラマ

ISBN978-4-257-90576-9
C0979 ¥571E
9784257905769
1920979005716
定価：本体571円 +税

朝日ソノラマ

眠れぬ夜の奇妙な話コミックス（A5判）

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眠れぬ夜の奇妙な話コミックス（B6判）

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竹本泉◆定価各600円
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最強の天使ニシテ最愛の悪魔①
中原えり◆定価各600円
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※価格はすべて税込みです。

TOKYO Pet Shop of Horrors™

4

Pet Shop Of Horrors: Tokyo Volume 4
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ISBN: 978-1-4278-1537-8

First TOKYOPOP printing: May 2009
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
Printed in the USA

VOLUME 4

BY

MATSURI AKINO

TOKYOPOP®

HAMBURG // LONDON // LOS ANGELES // TOKYO

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第11話／
Diehard

COUNT D HASN'T CLOSED HIS SHOP YET?

BUT IT'S AFTER HOURS EVEN FOR OUR LATE NIGHT BUSINESSES, ISN'T IT?

YES.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT. WHY IS HE OPEN NOW, IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT...

...WHEN DURING THE DAY HE'S WILLING TO CLOSE UP ON A MOMENT'S NOTICE TO MAKE TEA OR TAKE A NAP?

HMPH!

WELL, THAT'S JUST IT...

IT APPEARS THE COUNT IS HAVING SOME PROBLEMS WITH HIS CUSTOMERS.

...THERE IS NO ONE IN THIS SHOP MATCHING THAT DESCRIPTION.

AS I HAVE ALREADY TOLD YOU SEVERAL TIMES...

WE GOT A ROCK SOLID REPORT THAT TWO PEOPLE WHO LOOK EXACTLY LIKE THEM CAME INTO THIS BUILDING.

AND I SAY THAT YOU'RE LYING!

SO WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME WHERE THEY ARE BEFORE I DECIDE TO STOP ACTING SO NICE?

寵物店

THE ONLY PLACE LEFT IS YOUR SHOP RIGHT HERE!

WE'VE ALREADY SEARCHED THE OTHER SHOPS.

A LOW-LEVEL THUG LIKE YOU HAS NO BUSINESS TELLING ME HOW TO DO THINGS WHEN YOU CAN'T EVEN KEEP YOUR PEOPLE IN LINE!

EXCUSE ME?!

HOLD ON THERE! YOU GUYS STAY BACK.

THIS WAS ORIGINALLY OUR TERRITORY. YOU'LL SHOW THIS MAN SOME RESPECT AND STOP WALKING AROUND LIKE YOU OWN THE PLACE!

THAT'S ONE CRAZY MEMORY YOU HAVE ON YOU. ALL OF THIS STARTED THANKS TO THAT LONG-HAIRED LITTLE BASTARD OF YOURS!

NOW.

NOW.

NOW.

WHAT DID YOU SAY?! LET'S NOT FORGET THAT THIS WHOLE THING STARTED WHEN THAT TRAMP OF YOURS BATTED HER BITCH EYES AT OUR YOUNG MASTER!

SLAM!

SOUNDS LIKE QUITE A PARTY, D. NOW, WHY WASN'T I INVITED?

...TAIZUU.

OH MY GOODNESS! I HAD NO IDEA IT HAD GOTTEN SO LATE!

YES, THEY ARE.

HUH...?

NOW, NOW, EVERYONE, WE ARE CLOSED. THANK YOU AND HAVE A NICE EVENING.

SO, COUNT...

...ARE THESE GENTLE-MEN YOUR CUSTOMERS?

SAME GOES FOR US! ESPECIALLY NOT AFTER WE WENT THROUGH THE TROUBLE OF ENTERING ENEMY TERRITORY!!

LIKE THAT'S GONNA HAPPEN! WE CAN'T FACE OUR BOSS EMPTY-HANDED.

I'M WONDERING WHY YOU'RE STILL HERE KNOWING THAT THIS IS WOO-FEI RAU'S BUILDING!

ALL OF YOU JAPA-NESE GANG-STERS ...

I CAN'T TELL WHETHER YOU'RE CHINESE OR KOREAN, BUT...

NOW, I DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU'VE PRANCED IN FROM, BUT THIS IS THE LAND OF THE RISING SUN!

WHAT WAS THAT?!

I BEG YOUR PARDON!

...OUTSIDERS HAVE NO PLACE BUTTING IN!!

THAT'S ENOUGH, ALL OF YOU!

...EVERY ONE OF MY SHOP'S PETS!

YOU'RE UPSETTING ...

Pets ...?

FORGIVE US, COUNT.

OKAY, OKAY. SORRY.

.....

WE'LL BE BACK TOMORROW TO RETRIEVE THEM.

YES. YES.

...IF I FIND THAT THE TWO "PETS" WE'RE LOOKING FOR HAVE ESCAPED TOMORROW MORNING, I'M GOING TO BE VERY UPSET.

WE'LL LEAVE FOR THE NIGHT SO THAT YOU CAN PUT YOUR PETS TO BED.

BUT...

.....

ドヤ

WHAT DID YOU SAY?!

ドヤ

OUT OF THE WAY!

IT'S SAFE NOW.

PLEASE COME OUT.

SOOO...

INTERESTING COMPANY YOU KEEP LATE AT NIGHT, COUNT.

Whew...

COUNT ...

THANKS A LOT.

WHAT THE HELL DID YOU TWO DO?

WELL, UH... UHM...

WE JUST...

YES, I WAS CLEANING UP WHEN THEY RUSHED IN ASKING ME TO HIDE THEM.

WHAT?! THEY'RE STILL JUST KIDS!

LOVE?

WE JUST FELL IN LOVE!!

YOU SEEM ASHAMED, SWEETIE.

BE PROUD OF IT!!

TH-THAT'S... RIGHT.

...WHEN WE MET, WE DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT EACH OTHER'S BACKGROUND...

B-BUT...

WHAT THOSE MEN SAID WAS TRUE. WE'RE BOTH HEIRS TO RIVAL YAKUZA GANGS.

IT'S ROMEO AND JULIET!

AH... SO YOU MEAN...

.....

NOTE: The saying says that men from Tokyo are strongest and women from Kyoto are the most lady-like. so together they make the best couples.

I MEAN, THEY HAVE THAT SAYING.

THAT ONE ABOUT MEN FROM TOKYO AND WOMEN FROM KYOTO...

Y-YEAH.

Y-YES.

IT WAS A MEETING OF FATE!!

RIGHT...?

NOTE: Below the girl says "butter café." but the Japanese can also mean "sheep," so the boy thinks she says "sheep café."

YOU WERE SO CUTE.

I HAD NO CHOICE.

THIS SWEET YOUNG THING SAVED ME WHEN I WAS LOST IN THE SUBWAY LINE.

Excuse me...

Do you know the butler café on Otome Road?

STUPID!!

HUH?

HUH?

YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO SAY, "YOU CAME FROM KOBE, NOT KYOTO!!"

OH, I SEE.

WELL, FOR TONIGHT, I SUPPOSE THE BEST THING WOULD BE FOR YOU TO STAY HERE.

BUT TOMORROW, YOU MUST TALK TO YOUR FAMILIES PROPERLY.

HERE, YOUR SLEEP-OVER SETS.

S-SORRY...

Your timing's terrible!

WHEN I MAKE JOKES LIKE THAT YOU HAVE TO CUT IN!

JEEZ!

ドン

FORGET THE YAKUZA, THESE TWO BELONG IN THE NUT-HOUSE

ARE THEY LOVERS OR COME-DIANS?

AND I'LL BE FORCED TO MARRY MY UNCLE'S STUPID YOUNG MASTER!

IF I GO HOME, I'LL NEVER BE ALLOWED OUT AGAIN!

NO WAY!

D-DON'T WORRY, HONEY ...

COUNT! I THOUGHT YOU WERE OUR FRIEND!

RIGHT NOW, I'M SURE BOTH YOUR PARENTS ARE WORRIED ABOUT YOU.

THAT'S ENOUGH OF THAT!

YES, YES!

Awww...

OH, SWEETIE ...

...I... I WILL PROTECT YOU.

I DON'T NEED STATUS OR MONEY. I'M HAPPY JUST TO BE WITH YOU!

WHAT YOU BOTH NEED IS A NIGHT APART TO COOL YOUR HEADS!

YOU CAN THINK OF WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO DO AFTER THAT.

OOOOKAY.

OH, LOVE MUNCHKIN ...

OH, COOKIE-COO...

Phew...

I THOUGHT YOU WOULD HANDLE THE SITUATION A LITTLE MORE... LIBERALLY.

ABOUT WHAT?

I'M SURPRISED.

WHEW! MY GOOD-NESS...

ESPECIALLY IN ONES WITH LONG FAMILY HISTORIES LIKE THOSE TWO.

PLEASE DON'T BE MISTAKEN ABOUT ME.

コポ。ポ。

IT'S ONE THING FOR A CHILD TO DEVELOP A FLEETING CRUSH FOR SOMEONE.

SHAKESPEARE MAY HAVE ENDED HIS PLAY TRAGICALLY, BUT THEY SAY THAT BIRTH RESOLVES.

A FEW YEARS FROM NOW, IF THOSE KIDS MAKE SOME GRANDCHILDREN FOR THEIR FAMILIES, THE TWO GROUPS MAY STOP BEING RIVALS AND START BEING... WELL, A FAMILY.

BUT WHEN IT COMES TO MARRIAGE, THERE'S MORE AT STAKE THAN JUST PERSONAL FEELINGS.

HMPH!

GRSH

FORGET IT. WHATEVER THIS THING IS, IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH ME.

UGH.

WHY, TAIZUU... WHO KNEW YOU WERE SUCH A ROMANTICIST?

IF THE TWO FAMILIES FIGHT WITH EACH OTHER AND BOTH FALL TO RUIN...

ACTUALLY, THAT'S NOT TRUE.

...THAT WOULD BE QUITE CONVENIENT FOR ME.

SIGN: Currently Closed

臨時休業

WHAT THE--?!

AM 10:00

YOU DO, EH?

PLEASE DO NOT WORRY. I HAVE OUR PEOPLE FOLLOWING HIM.

NO, HE TOOK A CAR THIS MORNING TO ASAKUSA.

THAT LITTLE BASTARD! HE JUST DOES WHAT HE WANTS, DAY AFTER DAY!

YES. HE LEFT QUITE EARLY THIS MORNING.

This is the schedule for the shop while he's away.

LET ME GUESS, HE LEFT TO ATTEND THE GRAND OPENING OF A NEW BAKERY.

A CAR? ALONE?!

SO THEN THAT STUPID COUPLE FROM LAST NIGHT IS STILL IN THE BUILDING.

YES. WE MONITOR EVERYONE WHO ENTERS AND EXITS THE BUILDING. THEY HAVEN'T LEFT.

AM 11:00

WELCOME!!

I SEE.

I WONDER IF HE'S PLANNING ON USING THEM TO MEDIATE TALKS BETWEEN THE TWO FAMILIES.

BUT IT IS AN OLD AND ESTABLISHED FAMILY THAT HAS EXISTED SINCE THE EDO PERIOD. IT IS SAID THAT THEY ARE PLACED ON A DIFFERENT LEVEL OF MAFIA.

IS THAT THE MAIN HOUSE OF THE BOY'S?

NO.

RIGHT NOW IT IS A SMALL FAMILY WITH ONLY 30 MEMBERS.

THE KANTO RYOURYOU GROUP?

WHAT BREATH-TAKING HANDIWORK.

SPEAKING OF TEA, I HEAR THAT THE JAPANESE TEA CEREMONY CAN TAKE MANY DIFFERENT FORMS.

THAT IS TRUE. MINE IS THE TRADITIONAL CEREMONY OF THE URASEN FAMILY.

THE GOLDEN BEAUTY. I WOULD BE HONORED IF YOU SHARED A POT WITH ME.

AND THIS SNACK YOU'VE PREPARED IS TOO BEAUTIFUL TO EAT.

NONSENSE. THOUGH NEXT TIME, I WOULD LOVE TO TRY SOME OF YOUR FAMOUS CHINESE TEA, COUNT.

YOU KNOW, THE TEA WITH THE WATER FLOWER INSIDE THAT CREATES SUCH A WONDERFUL FRAGRANCE.

FOUR HUNDRED YEARS AGO, A MAN NAMED SEN NO RIKYUU CREATED OUR TEA CEREMONY. HIS GREAT GRANDSON, TOUTAKA, CREATED TWO VARIATIONS OF IT, ALLOWING EACH OF HIS THREE SONS TO HAVE THEIR OWN FORM OF CEREMONY. HE NAMED THE CEREMONIES AFTER THE THREE MAJOR FAMILIES OF THE ERA.

SOUSHU (SECOND SON) INHERITED THE MUSHANOKOUJISEN FAMILY CEREMONY. SOUSA (THIRD SON) INHERITED THE CEREMONY OF THE OMOTESEN FAMILY. AND SOUSHITSU (FOURTH SON) INHERITED THE CEREMONY YOU SAW TODAY.

NOTE The word "ura" means back or behind Count D is noting this and asking her about other ceremonies

SINCE THERE IS A BACK, THEN THERE MUST ALSO BE A "FRONT."

NOTE Omote = front

WAS THERE EVER A TIME WHEN THE STUDENTS OF EACH CEREMONY FOUGHT WITH EACH OTHER OVER THE DIFFERENCES?

OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT?

HA HA HA! ABSOLUTELY NOT!

BECAUSE THE BASIC SPIRIT FOR TEA IS THE SAME.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EACH CEREMONY IS NOT GREAT, BUT...

WELL, YOU COULD SAY THAT PEOPLE OF THE "OMOTE" FOLLOW A DOWN-TO-EARTH WAY THAT EMPHASIZES TRADITION.

WHILE THE PEOPLE OF THE "URA" ARE MORE FORWARD-THINKING AND INNOVATIVE.

I APOLOGIZE FOR MY RUDENESS.

IT'S FUNNY, BUT IT'S THE ART FORMS THAT SEEM MOST AT PEACE, THINGS LIKE FLOWER ARRANGEMENT AND THEATER ...

...THAT TEND TO ATTRACT THE MOST ARGUMENTATIVE AND VIOLENT PERSONALITIES. THEY'RE THE ONES WHO ARE MOST CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR FAMILY'S PLACE AND REPUTATION.

THEY ARE, BY DESIGN, FAR REMOVED FROM FIGHTING.

IT'S ALSO IMPORTANT TO REALIZE THAT TEA CEREMONIES WERE CREATED FOR GENERALS DURING THE WARRING ERA AS A METHOD OF CALMING THEMSELVES WHEN THEY GREW WEARY OF BATTLE.

IT IS AS YOU SAY.

THE WORLD OF PERFORMANCE IS BASED ON ONE'S TALENT, NOT ONE'S BLOOD.

THE STATUS OF YOUR PARENTS HAS NO EFFECT ON HOW YOUR PERFORMANCE IS RECEIVED.

IT'S THE AUDIENCE WHO DECIDES THAT.

ガラガラ

LONG TIME NO SEE.

WHY HELLO, JASMINE-CHAN!

There we go.

Yaaawn.

TO THINK THAT WHEN SHE FIRST CAME TO OUR HOUSE, SHE WAS SMALL ENOUGH TO FIT IN MY HAND.

ガシッ

I'M SORRY. I REALLY DO WISH I COULD STAY, BUT I HAVE OTHER PLACES TO VISIT TODAY.

I MUST BID YOU FAREWELL.

OH, IS THAT SO?

WELL, COME VISIT US AGAIN SOON.

MROW!

NOW, NOW. PLEASE RELAX, COUNT.

HAVE SOME MORE TEA SNACKS.

ROGER, THAT.

WE'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE.

...AND NOW SEEMS TO BE EN ROUTE TO YOKOHAMA.

THE COUNT HAS LEFT THE RYOURYOU GROUP'S HEAD HOUSE...

THE COUNT'S CAR LOOKS TO BE HEADING TOWARD KAMAKURA.

WE ARE CURRENTLY HOVERING ABOVE THE KARIBA CENTER.

PM 0:00

CLAP!

CLAP!

CLAP!

YOUR SCALES ARE SOME OF THE BEST THAT I'VE SEEN, AND IT'S NICE TO SEE YOU SO WELL TREATED!

THE SHEER NUMBER OF THEM!

HEH HEH HEH... THERE YOU GO. GO ON! THERE'S PLENTY FOR EVERY-ONE.

ナナナ

NO, NO. I'M PLEASED TO SEE THAT YOU ARE HEALTHY AS WELL.

I SHOULD THANK YOU FOR VISITING AN OLD MAN LIKE MYSELF.

PM 2:00

THE SECURITY IS JUST TOO HIGH, SIR. WE CAN'T GO ANY FURTHER.

THEY'VE DISMISSED ALL OF THEIR ATTENDANTS AND ARE TALKING ALONE.

BECAUSE OF THIS, THERE ARE MANY WHO THINK OF HIM AS A SORT OF SHADOW PRIME MINISTER.

MEOW!

MEOW!

THE BLACK FATHER OF THE POLITICAL WORLD...?!

YES. COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE "RETIRED ONE OF KAMAKURA." NUMEROUS OF HIS SUBORDINATES HAVE RISEN TO JOIN THE PARLIAMENT. ALL AT HIS INSISTENCE, I MIGHT ADD.

WHAT ARE YOU UP TO NOW?

COUNT D...

SHE'S BEEN A GIFTED ARTIST SINCE SHE WAS VERY YOUNG.

I THOUGHT I SHOULD LET HER STUDY AMONG THE BEST ARTISTS IN THE WORLD, SO I SENT HER TO STUDY ABROAD IN PARIS.

SHE'S THE PRETTIEST OF MY 13 GRAND-CHILDREN.

HA HA...

THIS IS CHIHIRO-CHAN.

HOWEVER, LAST WEEK SHE SENT ME A PICTURE MESSAGE SAYING THAT SHE MADE A BOYFRIEND OVER THERE...

OF COURSE, IF HE MAKES MY CHIHIRO-CHAN CRY...

...I WILL OUTLAW THE IMPORT OF BEAUJOLAIS NOUVEAU EVERYWHERE!!

PLEASE CALM DOWN, SIR.

H-HE LOOKS PRETTY HANDSOME.

AND I HEAR THE MEN IN FRANCE TREAT THEIR WOMEN REMARKABLY WELL.

W-WELL, I SUPPOSE YOU SHOULD TALK TO YOUR GRANDDAUGHTER AND SEE HOW SHE FEELS.

THESE DAYS, INTERNATIONAL MARRIAGES ARE NOT THAT UNUSUAL.

I'M OKAY WITH BEING TOLD HE'S A BOYFRIEND, BUT...

...IF SHE DECIDES SHE WANTS TO MARRY HIM, THEN WHAT SHOULD I DO? COUNT?

JAPAN HAS BEEN ISOLATED FOR SUCH A LONG TIME THAT CITIZENS VIEW FOREIGNERS WITH A MIX OF FEAR AND ADMIRATION. HOWEVER, TIMES ARE CHANGING.

THAT'S NOT NECESSARILY THE CASE IN JAPAN.

THOUGH WE'VE LONG ENTERTAINED VISITORS FROM THE MAINLAND, WE'RE STILL AN ISLAND COUNTRY.

...

...MAYBE THIS IS A NATURAL PATH OF EVENTS.

THE WORLD HAS GOTTEN SMALLER.

IN AN ERA WHERE ALL THE INFORMATION KNOWN TO MAN IS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS...

WELCOME, COUNT!!

I APOLOGIZE FOR BEING LATE.

PM 5:00

Charity Party

THIS IS A BIG DEAL. THERE ARE EVEN SOME HIGH-RANKING JAPANESE MILITARY OFFICIALS HERE.

YES. HE'S ENTERTAINING HER NOW, ALONG WITH A FEW OTHER PROMINENT WIVES.

HIGH-RANKING MILITARY?

THE U.S. AMBASS-ADRESS?

YOU'RE TELLING ME HE'S NOW AT A PARTY SPONSORED BY THE AMERICAN AMBASS-ADRESS?!

I THINK I MAY HAVE JUST TALKED THE SRI LANKAN AMBASSADRESS INTO TAKING ONE OF THEM.

SHE'S A MOTHER! A FEW DAYS AGO SHE HAD CHILDREN. SIX OF THEM!

HOW IS MINREI-CHAN?

AH, AND MY DEAR LADY AMBASSA-DRESS OF TURKEY, IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME.

LADY AMBASSA-DRESS OF FRANCE...

COUNT D?

MY...YOU LOOK JUST LIKE YOUR FATHER.

!!

HAVE YOU MET THE AMBASSADRESS OF THE NETHERLANDS?

IT IS A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU, LADY AMBASSA-DRESS. I HAVE A PET SHOP IN SHINJUKU.

WHEN I WAS A STUDENT THERE...

DO YOU KNOW LEIDEN UNIVERSITY?

YES. IT'S ONE OF THE PREMIER UNIVERSITIES IN THE NETHERLANDS, IS IT NOT? BUILT IN THE 16TH CENTURY, I BELIEVE.

YES! I THINK IT'S ALREADY BEEN 30 YEARS.

ARE YOU A FRIEND... OF MY FATHER'S?

SCIENTIST BELIEVE IT IS SIMPLY A LARGE MOUNTAIN DOG.

AAH! BUT ACTUALLY, THAT IS NOT A WOLF.

...COUNT D CAME TO STUDY THE UNIVERSITY'S STUFFED SPECIMEN OF THE NOW-EXTINCT JAPANESE WOLF.

I'D IMAGINE THEY JUST TOOK ANY ANIMAL THEY DIDN'T KNOW BACK ON THE BOATS WITH THEM.

TO THE EUROPEANS OF THAT AGE, JAPAN WAS A HUGE, MYSTERIOUS FRONTIER.

THAT STUFFED SPECIMEN WAS GIVEN TO THE SCHOOL OVER A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

THAT'S WHAT I HEARD.

HEH... THOSE DAYS ARE LONG PAST. TOKYO AND OSAKA ARE NOW FULL OF BIG BUILDINGS AND LOOK A LOT LIKE NEW YORK. AN UNFORTUNATE TRUTH, IN MY OPINION.

I'LL ADMIT THAT UNTIL I STARTED COLLEGE, I THOUGHT JAPANESE WOMEN WORE KIMONOS EVERY DAY.

IT'S STRANGE HOW MUCH WE DON'T KNOW ABOUT OUR FELLOW COUNTRIES.

...I'M SURE IT WOULD HAVE NO DOUBT FALLEN PREY TO WESTERN URBANIZATION.

ALTHOUGH WITHOUT ITS CURRENT LAWS TO REGULATE THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW BUILDINGS...

KYOTO IS PROBABLY THE ONLY PLACE THAT IS KEEPING MUCH OF THE JAPANESE TRADITION.

IN FACT, UNLESS THE JAPANESE GOVERN-MENT...

...DECIDES TO INTERVENE, PEOPLE OF PURE JAPANESE DESCENT MAY SOON BE A THING OF THE PAST.

JAPAN WILL SOON BECOME A MELTING POT LIKE THE U.S.

WELL, THE WESTERN INFLUENCE IS A GIVEN CONSIDERING HOW MANY WESTERNERS NOW LIVE HERE.

IN MY WORLD WE CALL THEM HYBRIDS.

CREATURES OF MIXED RACE. HOWEVER, OFTEN HYBRIDS ARE THE HEARTIEST OF ALL PETS. AND ISN'T THAT WHAT THE PIONEER SPIRIT OF AMERICA IS ALL ABOUT?

HMPH

YOU FORGET ABOUT NATIVE AMERI-CANS

AFTER ALL, THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A PURE AMERICAN. THEIR ROOTS ALL GO BACK TO EUROPE, AFRICA OR ASIA.

HEH HEH...

THE JAPANESE HAD A BETTER RUN THAN THE AMERI-CANS.

MY FATHER ...

SO, COUNT ...

WHAT OF YOUR FATHER? WHERE IS HE NOW?

HE IS CURRENTLY WITH MY GRANDFATHER...

...ON A JOURNEY AROUND THE WORLD.

I WONDER WHERE IN OUR GREAT WORLD HE IS RIGHT NOW?

This year they will definitely win the series!

PM 9:00

BY THE WAY, HE IS CURRENTLY IN A SECRET MEETING AT AN EXCLUSIVE RESTAURANT WITH AN INFLUENTIAL MAN IN KANSAI FINANCE.

...THEN IT'S INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY WITH AMBASSADRESSES AND MILITARY OFFICIALS...

FIRST IT'S YAKUZA AND SHADOW POLITICS...

WHAT IS IT NOW?!

RRRRRR

TO THINK THOSE STUPID KIDS ARE CAUSING SUCH A BIG COMMOTION.

THEN AGAIN, THIS IS THE GUY WHO LET THAT BIRD LOOSE WHEN EVERYONE WAS TERRIFIED OF BIRD FLU.

AND HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE LEADER OF THOSE TERRORISTS RESPONSIBLE FOR THAT BIG TOKYO POWER OUTAGE.

DAD!

HELLO, WOO-FEI.

AH...!!

N-NO!

EVERYTHING HERE IS ABSOLUTELY... FINE.

WHAT'S WRONG? IS THERE A PROBLEM WITH THE BUILDING?

BEING THE OWNER OF NEO CHINATOWN IS ONLY MY OUTWARD FACE.

IN TRUTH, MOST OF OUR MONEY COMES FROM INSIDE STOCK TRADES. WE USE THAT CAPITAL TO BUY LAND THAT HOUSES TERRITORIES OF THE GREATER FAMILIES IN THE TAIWANESE AND HONG KONG MAFIAS.

RIGHT NOW, WE ARE CLOSE TO TAKING THE TOP POSITION OF FOREIGN POWER IN KABUKI-CHO.

I HAVE HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR YOU, SON.

YES, FATHER.

UNLIKE IN THE PAST, POWER TODAY IS NOT GAINED BY THE SWORD.

TODAY, IT IS WEALTH THAT CREATES POWER. THOSE WHO UNDERSTAND THE FLOW OF ECONOMICS ARE THE MEN WHO RULE TODAY.

WELL, I'VE ONLY MET HIM ONCE OR TWICE, BUT I WAS INDEBTED TO HIS GRANDFATHER IN THE PAST.

GRAND-FATHER?!

YES. YOU MEAN COUNT D.

EXACTLY WHAT KIND OF PERSON IS HE?

BY THE WAY...

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT OUR NEW TENANT. THE CHINESE MAN WHO RUNS THE PET SHOP ON THE 13TH FLOOR. I WROTE YOU ABOUT HIM WHEN HE FIRST MOVED IN, BUT THEN YOU MENTIONED THAT YOU ALREADY KNOW HIM.

GET ALONG...

I SEE THIS AS A VERY FORTUITOUS TURN OF EVENTS. I HOPE YOU GET ALONG WELL WITH HIM.

...I RETURNED THE FAVOR.

HE SAID THAT HIS GRANDSON WAS LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO OPEN SHOP IN JAPAN, SO...

N- NO...IT'S NOTHING.

YOU SOUND TIRED, WOO-FEI. I HOPE YOU'RE NOT WORKING TOO HARD.

NO, BUT--

IS COUNT D THE SORT OF PERSON THAT WOULD MAKE A POWERFUL ALLY?

WOO-FEI? WHAT'S WRONG?

YOU MUST BE JOKING.

HE IS--

--WAIT A SECOND...

YES.

SEVERAL NEW HIGH-RISES HAVE BEEN CONSTRUCTED SINCE THE LAST TIME YOU WERE HERE. THE CITY CONTINUES TO GROW AND CHANGE.

IT'S ONLY A TWO-HOUR FLIGHT.

YOU SHOULD SHOW YOUR FACE IN SHANGHAI MORE OFTEN.

.....

SHE HAS BEEN WANTING TO SEE YOU.

SHUN-LEI AS WELL...

THEN, I WISH YOU HEALTH.

YES, FATHER.

SOME-TIME.

AS LONG AS SHE IS IN SHANGHAI...

...THERE IS NO PLACE FOR ME TO RETURN.

WELL, HE MAY BE MAKING A POWER PLAY HIMSELF.

RAU? YOU MEAN THE OWNER OF NEO CHINATOWN? HIS FATHER IS THE HEAD OF THE SHANGHAI MAFIA, ISN'T HE?

IT SEEMS WOO-FEI RAU HAS BEEN COLLECTING SOLDIERS.

歌舞伎町一番街

HIS PEOPLE HAVE BEEN SEEN CONTACTING THE HEAD OF THE KANTO RYOURYOU GROUP AS WELL AS THE SHADOW PRIME MINISTER!

HAVE MOBILE SQUADS ONE THROUGH SIX READY TO MOVE OUT!

Tokyo Terrorist Defense Headquarters

...BUT IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S NOW SHOWING HIS TRUE FORM.

HE MADE HIMSELF OUT TO BE A SHARP, YOUNG CHINESE ENTREPRENEUR DOING LEGITIMATE BUSINESS IN JAPAN...

WE'RE LOOKING AT A THREE-WAY GANG WAR BETWEEN THE KANTO, KANSAI AND SHANGHAI MAFIAS!

THE ARMY REMAINS ON ALERT. WE WANT THIS SETTLED PEACEFULLY AND WITH AS LITTLE VIOLENCE AS POSSIBLE, PEOPLE!

IN KANSAI, PEOPLE ARE ALREADY STARTING TO RIOT, THOUGH THAT MAY HAVE TO DO WITH HOW POORLY THE TIGERS ARE PLAYING.

THE NATIONAL GUARD HAS BEEN DISPATCHED TO THE KANTO AREA. THEY'LL BE ASSISTING US THERE.

新中華街

OH, MY. WELL, WELL.

従業員通

COUNT!

WHAT IS ALL THE COMMOTION ABOUT?

MAY I REMIND YOU THAT THE MAFIA FAMILIES OF THOSE TWO KIDS YOU'RE HARBORING PROMISED TO RETURN IN FORCE TONIGHT?

NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...I DO RECALL...

...

WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN, D?!

HUH?

COUNT, AS PROMISED WE'VE COME TO PICK THEM UP.

DADDY!

!!

PAPA!

...IT'S TIME TO GO HOME.

MISS...

NOW, LITTLE MASTER ...

NO. WE ARE...

WH- WHEN DID THEY--?!

HOW DID YOU EVEN GET IN?!

THERE ARE MORE COPS OUTSIDE THAN AT A ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE!

EVEN TAIZUU?

GOOD- NESS!

GET THEM!!

THEY WENT INTO THE BACK OF THE SHOP!

HOLD ON! YOU BAS- TARDS!

AH, WAIT. EVERY- ONE?!

MY FATHER DESIGNED THIS BUILDING.

DID HE DESIGN THIS AS WELL?!

OVER HERE!

OVER THERE!

AS I THOUGHT!

THERE'S A SECRET DOOR YOU HAVE TO ENTER TO GET TO THE LABYRINTH!

HUFF!

I FOUND THEM! THEY'RE BOTH HERE!

!!

THIS IS...!

THEY'RE ON THE ROOF!!

HUFF!

I HATE YOU, PAPA!

DON'T COME ANY CLOSER!

GIVE IT A REST ALREADY! BOTH OF YOU!

...THEN WE'D RATHER DIE HERE!!

IF YOU'RE GOING TO SEPARATE US...

COUNT?!

THAT MIGHT BE THE BETTER CHOICE.

...DON'T YOU THINK YOU'RE BEING IRRESPONSIBLE AS ADULTS?

IT'S OKAY TO PUT YOUR LIFE ON THE LINE FOR ONE NIGHT'S LOVE, BUT...

CH-CHILD?

IF A CHILD WAS BORN BETWEEN THE TWO OF YOU...

TO THINK THAT A CHILD OF MIXED BLOOD WILL BRING HAPPINESS TO BOTH FAMILIES...

IT'S RIDICULOUS. PLEASE PUT ASIDE SUCH SILLY DREAMS.

HUH?!

...IN THE FUTURE, THAT CHILD WILL...

...PROBABLY BECOME AN ENEMY TO YOU.

...WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BRING YOUR FAMILY TO AN END!

...THEN *THEIR* CHILD OR GRANDCHILD ...

EVEN IF THE CHILD DOESN'T PROVE PROBLEM-ATIC...

I UNDER-STAND. IT'S HARD TO DIRTY YOUR HANDS WHEN IT'S FAMILY.

BUT YOU SEE THAT THIS MUST BE DONE.

THERE-FORE, I SHALL...

COUNT... D?

THEY'RE JUST... JUST...

B-BUT...

SO, WHILE YOU STILL CAN...

...YOU SHOULD PUT THE SPARKS OUT.

FOR YOUR SAKE AND FOR THE SAKE OF BOTH YOUR FAMILIES.

!!

CLICK

IN THE NAME OF COUNT D!

AH! THAT'S MY...!!

W-WAIT, COUNT!

HAVE YOU DECIDED TO GIVE UP THIS FOOLISHNESS AND RETURN TO YOUR FAMILIES?

YES?

YEAH.

ME, TOO. I WON'T EVER FORGET IT.

I... HAVEN'T REGRET-TED ANY OF IT.

I'LL ALWAYS BE HAPPY WE MET.

SWEET-HEART...

HONEY...

MISS!

LITTLE MASTER!

LITTLE MASTER?!

THOSE IDIOTS!

MISS!!

?!

!!

MY ROLE IS FINISHED.

GOOD JOB, FATHER FORTUNE.

ズル

……

LITTLE MASTER!

わっ

AH…

HUH?

OH, YOU CRAZY LITTLE GIRL!

WE'RE ALIVE?! THE BOTH OF US?!

ガシッ

THE FUTURE WILL BE AS IT WILL.

...I GOT IT. WE WON'T BE SAVAGE ABOUT THIS.

I HAVE SEEN IT CLEARLY WITH MY OWN EYES.

THE RESOLVE IN BOTH OF YOU...

PAPA...

DADDY!

I NEED A DAMN DRINK.

おおお～

COUNT...

I WILL CELEBRATE THE NEW CHILD THAT IS BORN BETWEEN YOU.

I PRAY FOR YOUR HAP-PINESS.

Then let us shake hands right away.

This is something to be happy about!

!!

WE'LL BEGIN THE PREPARATIONS FOR PEACE TOMORROW EVENING.

LOOKS LIKE WE HAVE A BIG WEDDING TO PLAN!

LET'S GO, EVERYONE!

THE SUN IS STARTING TO RISE.

TALK ABOUT A CRAZY NIGHT.

OH, AND YOUR FRIEND WE MET THE OTHER NIGHT!

BE SURE TO INVITE HIM TO THE WEDDING!

THANK YOU, COUNT!

.....

THEY ARE JAPANESE MOLES.

WHAT ARE THOSE PEOPLE?!

JUST WHAT ...

FROM THE THE VOLCANIC SOIL OF MOUNT FUJI...

THEY ARE THE TWO GREAT UNDERGROUND POWERS ORIGINATING FROM AZUMA AND KOBE.

JAPA-NESE MOLES.

THEY ARE NOCTURNAL.

M-MOLES?!

...AND CAUSE ALL SORTS OF NEW POWER RELATION-SHIPS.

... A THIRD NEW FACTION WILL RISE...

BUT IN A FEW YEARS...

AH!

BUT BEFORE THAT! WHAT WAS WITH THAT GIGANTIC BIRD A MOMENT AGO?!

IS THAT A NEW WEAPON YOU'VE BEEN BREEDING?!

.....

HMPH.

IF YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT THE CHILD OF THAT STUPID COUPLE, I'M WORRIED.

OH, AND GIVE ME BACK MY GUN!

TAIZUU ...

ARE YOU PLANNING SOME SORT OF PARTY TODAY?

.....

THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE.

STORY 11 END

THERE ARE ALL MANNER OF HUMANS. THERE ARE ALL MANNER OF ANIMALS.

NEO CHINATOWN, SHIJUKU, TOKYO

HUMANS, ANIMALS...

THERE ARE MEN, WOMEN AND PEOPLE WHO ARE EITHER.

...AND THINGS THAT ARE NEITHER...

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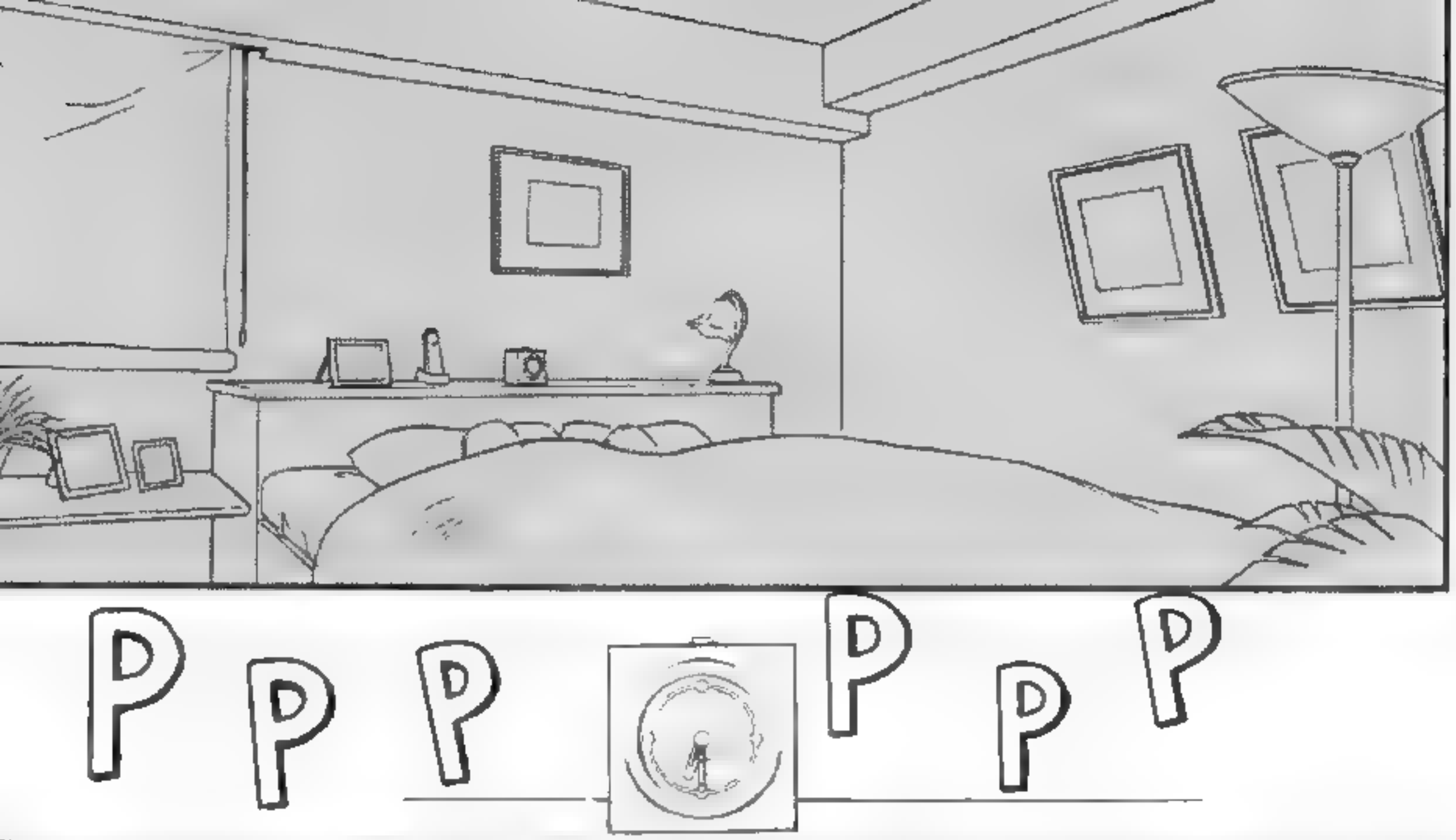
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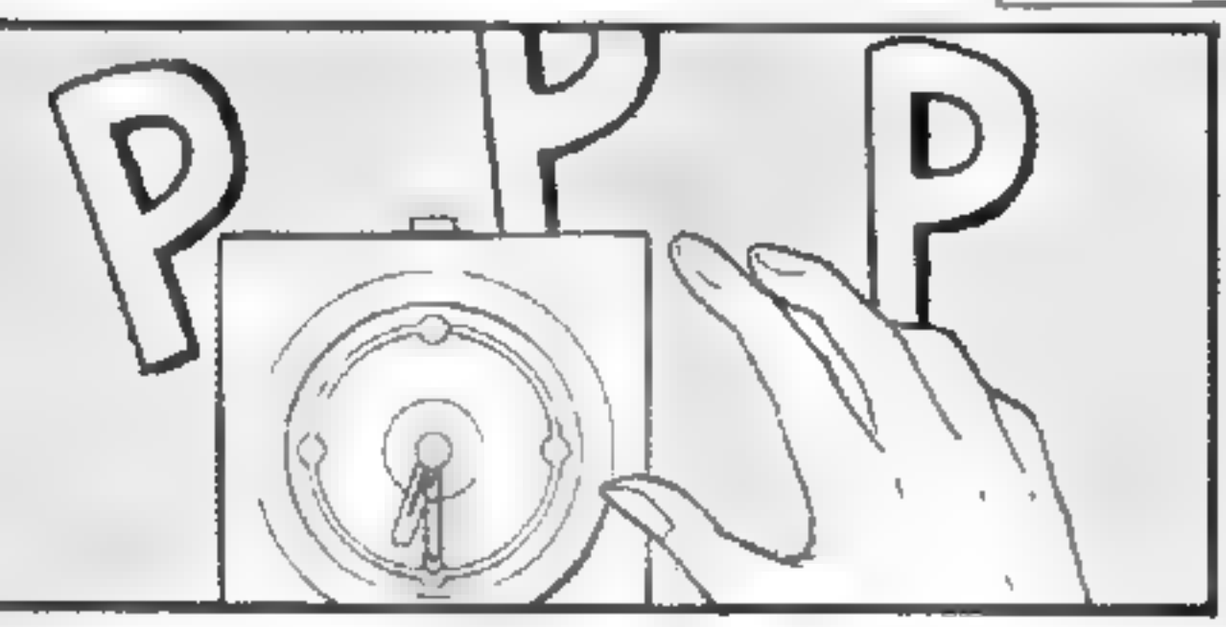
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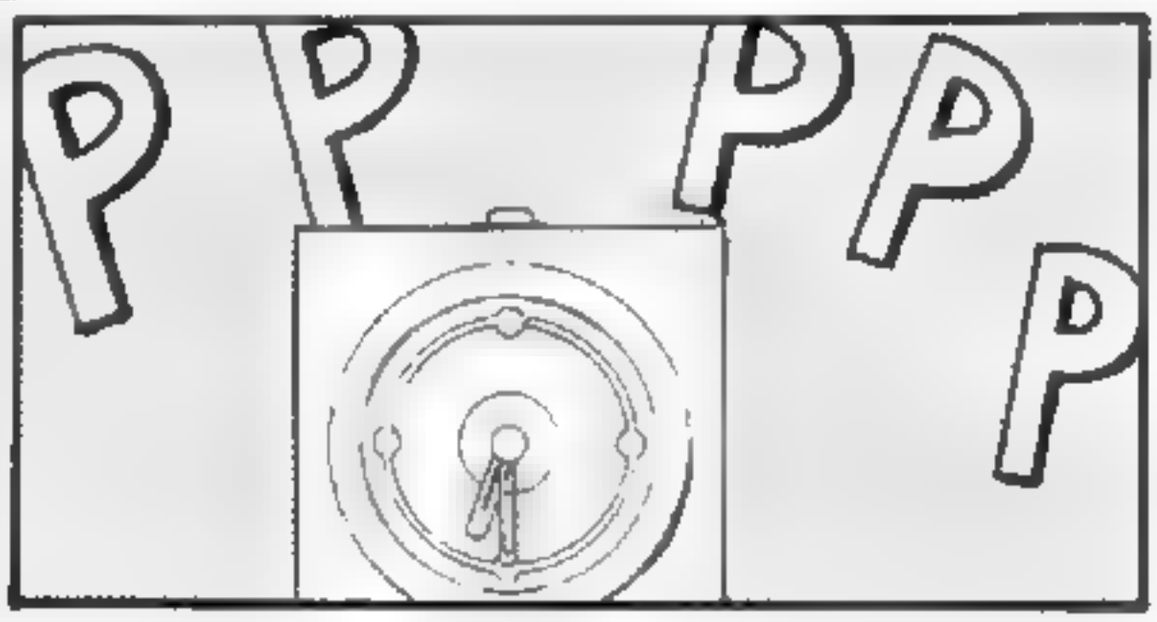
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UH...

GOOD MORNING, TOURU.

NN ...

GOOD MORNING, MAKI-CHAN.

AND I HAVE THAT PLANNING MEETING FOR THE NEW NETWORK!

UGH!

OH, SHIT! I HAVE A PRESENTA-TION THIS MORNING!

COME ON, NOW! YOU BOTH HAVE TO WAKE UP OR YOU'LL BE LATE.

IT SHOULD BE IN YOUR TOP DRAWER! THE ONE ON THE RIGHT!

DAMN! I FORGOT TO RECHARGE MY CELL PHONE...

HONEY, DO YOU KNOW WHERE MY WHITE SHIRT IS?

MN... SAKUYA, JUST FIVE MORE MINUTES...

THOSE THINGS TASTE TERRIBLE! THE LEAVES YOU GET AT THE SHOP NEAR YOUR WORK ARE THE ONLY ONES I LIKE!

WE HAVE THOSE TEA PACKS YOUR BOSS GAVE YOU LAST CHRISTMAS. USE THOSE.

MAKI, YOU KNOW HOW LATE I'VE BEEN WORKING. I HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE.

The shop is right next to your office.

I ASKED YOU TO PICK SOME UP FOR ME.

OH, HELL! THERE ARE NO MORE LEAVES FOR MY MILK TEA.

MAKI-CHAN...

YES. YES. GOOD LUCK ON YOUR PRESEN-TATION.

THEN, I'M OFF, SAKUYA.

BE A GOOD BOY AND WATCH THE HOUSE.

I KEEP TELLING YOU TO STOP TREATING ME LIKE A CHILD!

NO, IT'S FINE. I'LL BE LATE!

I'LL MAKE SURE TO REMEMBER AND BUY SOME MORE TODAY.

I'M GOOD WITH JUST MILK.

AH...

HAVE A GOOD TRIP!

WHEW...

MY GOODNESS.

I LOVE WHEN IT RAINS.

THE CHILDREN ALL STAY INSIDE SO THE TOWN IS QUIET.

RAIN?

IT'S FINALLY NICE AND QUIET.

Yawn!

THEY MUST BE AROUND SIX MONTHS. WELL, IF I HAD TO GUESS.

THEY HAVE SO MUCH ENERGY.

KITTENS?

MROW!

MEOW!

.....

.....

HISS!!

GASP!

THEY HAVEN'T LEARNED TO RESPECT THE TERRITORY OF OTHER CATS YET.

DAMN.

SCREECH!

THUD!!

LET'S GO.

YEAH.

OK.

NO... IT LOOKS LIKE I JUST GRAZED IT.

OH, CRAP! DID YOU RUN IT OVER?!

Y-YEAH...

HIDEMARO, ARE YOU OKAY?!

W-WHO ARE YOU?!

YOU SHOULD BE MORE CAREFUL WHEN CROSSING THE STREET.

Y-YES. THANK YOU.

WHERE IS YOUR OWNER?

THEY'RE BOTH AT WORK. NO ONE IS HOME RIGHT NOW.

SH-SHOULDN'T YOU GO TO A HOSPITAL?

I'LL DEAL WITH THIS, HIDEMARO.

RETURN TO YOUR HOUSE.

UH... OKAY.

WOBBLE

...!

ARE YOU INJURED?!

HMM...

LEAVE IT TO ME.

W-WHAT SHOULD I DO?!

FEMTO!

寵物店

...IS NOT AN ANIMAL CLINIC.

LIKE I JUST SAID, THIS SHOP...

IT DOESN'T REALLY HURT ANYMORE.

IT'S ALL RIGHT...

WELL, BRING HIM IN FOR NOW.

I KNOW, COUNT D!

Huff!

Huff!

BUT I DIDN'T KNOW WHERE ELSE TO TAKE HIM.

AH...

!!

AM I THAT STRANGE TO LOOK AT?

Y-YOU ARE--

I AM A MALE CALICO... AFTER ALL.

YES, WELL...

A CAT THAT HAS MIXED PATCHES OF WHITE, BLACK AND BROWN FUR...

...IS USUALLY BORN FEMALE. IT HAS TO DO WITH THEIR DNA STRUCTURE.

A MALE CALICO? I MEAN...

IS THAT SO RARE?

...HUH?

OH!

THE CHANCE OF A MALE BEING BORN...?

LET'S SEE. IT'S ABOUT ONE IN EVERY 30,000 CATS.

I'D ESTIMATE THIS CAT'S VALUE AT ABOUT 800,000 TO 1,000,000 YEN.*

*About $8000 to $10,000

ELITE?

THAT'S INCREDIBLE!

YOU'RE A VERY ELITE CLASS.

NOTHING COULD BE FARTHER FROM THE TRUTH.

I'M A VALUABLE CAT...

...WHO DOESN'T HAVE A MATE.

THERE'S NO WAY FOR ME TO BRING ABOUT A SECOND GENERATION.

I'M LIKE A LIVING CORPSE.

I JUST SPEND MY DAYS LYING ABOUT, COMPLETELY WITHOUT AIM.

Ep 3

YOU'RE LIKE A *DRAG QUEEN* WHO HAS GONE UNDER THE KNIFE!

AAH! YOU'RE *IMPOTENT!*

And I thought Orcot was callous!

!!

MALE HOUSE-CATS ARE OFTEN...

WELL, LET'S JUST SAY...

...THEY DON'T REPRODUCE VERY WELL.

?

He's good looking So what's the problem?

AH, WELL...

IT IS ANOTHER KIND OF HAPPINESS FOR A CAT TO LIVE OUT HIS DAYS PEACEFULLY LIKE THAT, WITHOUT WORRY ABOUT WHERE HIS NEXT MEAL IS COMING FROM.

OR YOU CAN BE TAKEN IN BY A HUMAN OWNER, BE NEUTERED AND BECOME A PART OF THEIR FAMILY.

LOOK, ON THE STREETS IT'S PAR FOR THE COURSE TO HAVE AS MANY MATES AS POSSIBLE. AFTER ALL, IT'S SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST OUT THERE.

THEY BOTH WORK AND COME HOME LATE, SO IT SEEMS LIKE THE HOUSE IS REALLY JUST A PLACE FOR THEM TO SLEEP!

MY OWNERS ARE A YOUNG COUPLE NAMED MAKIKO AND TOURU.

HUH?

AH, BUT...

...MY FAMILY IS BEGINNING TO FALL APART.

MAYBE THEY'RE STARTING TO GET TIRED OF EACH OTHER?

AND WHEN THEY DO, THEY FIGHT.

THIS PAST YEAR THEY HAVEN'T TALKED MUCH TO EACH OTHER.

SOME-
TIMES
I THINK...

...THAT
I'M THE
ONLY THING
KEEPING
THEM
TOGETHER.

THAT IS
ALSO AN
IMPORTANT
ROLE FOR
A PET.

...MY GUESS IS
THAT MAKI AND
TOURU WOULD
SEPARATE.

YEAH...

...IF
I EVER
DISAPPEAR...

DON'T YOU THINK
THAT IT MIGHT
BE BETTER IN THE
LONG RUN IF THEY
WERE TO SEPARATE
NOW INSTEAD OF
CONTINUING TO LIVE
TOGETHER WITH
DEAD FEELINGS?

PERHAPS,
BUT...

...IT
JUST
DOESN'T
WORK
OUT
THAT
WAY.

MARRIED
COUPLES
MAY PROMISE
TO LOVE
EACH OTHER
ETERNALLY,
BUT SOME-
TIMES...

THAT
CANNOT BE
HELPED.

...IF THEY WERE TO SEPARATE, WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO *THE CHILD?*

DOES THE COUPLE HAVE A CHILD OTHER THAN YOU?

HUH?

YEAH.

?

PROBABLY?

IT'S PROBABLY MAKI AND TOURU'S...

I REMEMBER...

...THAT IT WAS RAINING THAT DAY, MUCH LIKE TODAY.

MAKI-CHAN, IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT.

I'M SORRY ... I'M SO SORRY.

DON'T CRY ANYMORE.

Hic!

Sob!

I MEAN...

I'M THE ONE WHO SHOULD APOLOGIZE.

TOURU...

THIS JUST MEANS IT WASN'T THE RIGHT TIME FOR US.

THEY'RE NOT BREATHING. EXCEPT FOR THIS ONE, AND HE'S ALMOST--

THEY STILL HAVE THEIR UMBILICAL CORDS ON THEM.

ABAN-DONED CATS...?

Mew!

YOU HEAR ME?! YOU CAN'T DIE, TOO!!

YOU CAN'T DIE!

MAKI-CHAN?!

NO!

AND SO THEY DECIDED TO TAKE ME IN.

I HA KNOW HA THAT! HA!

NO WAY! WE'RE NOT GOING TO SELL HIM, TOURU-CHAN!

NOW, WE'LL PUT SOME WEIGHT ON HIM!

HIS FUR HAS STARTED TO GROW, TOO.

LOOK! HE'S ABLE TO DRINK MILK BY HIMSELF.

NO MATTER WHAT!

SILLY GIRL, I WOULDN'T SELL HIM.

YEAH?

SO WHAT ABOUT IT?

HUH.

SWEETIE, THIS GUY IS A MALE CALICO.

THOSE DAYS, THEY SEEMED TO BE HAVING FUN EVEN WHEN THEY WERE FIGHTING.

WOW!

THIS LITTLE SQUIRT?!

IF WE BOUGHT HIM AT A PET SHOP, HE'D COST ABOUT 1,000,000 YEN.

AT FIRST, HE WAS ABOUT THE SAME SIZE AS ME.

ONLY HE WAS A LITTLE WIGGLING MASS OF FLESH. KINDA GROSS, ACTUALLY.

THERE WAS **SOMEONE ELSE** IN OUR HOUSE.

...I NOTICED IT.

BUT ONE DAY...

EVENTUALLY, THOUGH, HE TOOK HUMAN SHAPE.

SOON HE WAS ABLE TO STAND ON TWO LEGS...

...AND HE LEARNED HOW TO LAUGH AND CRY.

AS I GOT OLDER, I BEGAN TO LEARN ABOUT DIFFERENT THINGS, AND AT LAST IT STARTED TO MAKE SENSE.

YES...

THE CHILD WASN'T REALLY ALIVE. HE WAS A CONSOLIDATION OF THE HUMAN SOUL--A GHOST.

THAT... COULD IT BE...?

WHAT WAS STRANGE WAS THAT, FOR SOME REASON, MAKIKO AND TOURU COULDN'T SEE HIM.

THE CHILD ALWAYS SEEMS TO LOOK AT ME WITH JEALOUS EYES.

This is more of Tokiwa's specialty

I THINK HE'S THE GHOST OF MAKI AND TOURU'S LOST CHILD.

A GHOST OF A MIS-CARRIED BABY...

NOTE Tokiwa is a character from a different Matsuri Akino manga that dealt with ghosts and demons.

BUT...

...THERE ARE STILL TIMES WHEN THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MARRIED COUPLES CANNOT BE OVERCOME.

COUNT ...

LIKE YOU SAID...

...EVEN IF THERE WERE A REAL CHILD...

BUT MAKIKO AND TOURU CANNOT SEE THAT CHILD.

...WHEN COUPLES DIVORCE, EITHER THE MOTHER OR THE FATHER TAKES CUSTODY OF THE CHILD, RIGHT?

IF THEY BOTH LEAVE THAT HOUSE...

THEY DON'T REALIZE HE EVEN EXISTS!

...THAT CHILD WILL BE LEFT COMPLETELY ALONE.

WHAT WILL BECOME OF IT?

SAKUYA-SAN...

SLAM!

...

...

...

COULD YOU BE ANY RUDER?!

LOOK, IT'S BAD ENOUGH THAT A GUY CAN'T WALK IN HERE WITHOUT TRIPPING OVER ONE OF YOUR LOLITAS, BUT NOW YOU'RE MOVING ON TO PRETTY BOYS?!

WELL, COUNT, I CAN'T REALLY SPEAK FOR YOUR TASTES.

OR DO YOU INTEND TO GO INTO BUSINESS WITH THIS YOUNG MAN?

HOLD IT.

HUH?!

WELL, OF COURSE I SEE HIM!

YOU CAN SEE THIS BOY, TAIZUU?

I SEE.

SAKUYA-SAN...

THOUGH, TO ME...

...HE LOOKS MORE LIKE A GIRL THAN A BOY. YOU PICK THIS KID UP IN SHINJUKU NI-CHOUME, D?

BIRDS OF A FEATHER, I GUESS.

NOTE Shinjuku ni-choume is a well know gay district

YOU MEAN THAT, COUNT?

I THINK I MIGHT BE ABLE TO GRANT YOUR WISH.

MIS-TER...

...YOU'RE AN IDIOT.

ISN'T THAT "POKECHU" SHOW ON NOW OR SOMETHING? GO HOME AND WATCH IT!

URGH!

BEAT IT, YOU LITTLE BRAT!

WHY DO YOU THINK HE CAME FROM SHINJUKU NI-CHOUME? ARE THERE LOTS OF PRETTY PEOPLE THERE?

I'M PRETTY! WILL YOU TAKE ME THERE? LET'S GO, LET'S GO!

AND WHO ARE THESE ABSOLUTELY ADORABLE FRIENDS YOU'VE BROUGHT?

IT'S BEEN AWHILE, MAMA.

WELL, LOOK WHO IT IS!

COUNT-CHAN, SWEETIE, WELCOME, WELCOME, WELCOME!

WELL, THEN.

Hold me!

C'mere, you big lug!

I DON'T BELIEVE IN SHELTERING KIDS FROM THE WORLD.

WHAT KIND OF STUPID--

TAKING KIDS TO A PLACE LIKE THIS!

WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?!

WOULD YOU LIKE SOMETHING TO EAT? IT'S ALL HANDMADE BY MAMA, AND I ASSURE YOU, IT'S DELICIOUS.

YOU'RE RIGHT! THAT'S WOO-FEI RAU! ♡

HEY, I RECOGNIZE THAT MAN! HE'S THE OWNER OF NEO CHINATOWN, RIGHT?

HE'S THE HEIR OF THE SHANGHAI FINANCIAL CONGLOM-ERATE!

YOU COULD SAY THAT.

SOME OF THESE PEOPLE HAVE BEEN SURGICALLY ALTERED AND SOME HAVEN'T.

THERE ARE ALL DIFFERENT KINDS HERE.

SO HAVE ALL THESE MEN BEEN *NEUTERED?*

!!

AND RIGHT ABOVE US IS A PLACE FOR HANDSOME, STRONG MEN TO MEET OTHER MEN.

THEY EVEN HAD A WEDDING THERE LAST WEEK.

AND LIKE ALL WOMEN, THEY JUST WANT TO FALL IN LOVE WITH A NICE, NORMAL MAN.

THE PEOPLE IN MY SHOP ARE ALL WOMEN IN BOTH BODY AND SOUL.

HO HO HO!

THOSE COUPLES USUALLY JUST ADOPT IF THEY REALLY WANT KIDS.

.....

WELL, LET ME TELL YOU...

Kat!

...CHILDREN ARE LOADS OF FUN, AND BELIEVE ME, THEY'RE EVEN *MORE* FUN TO MAKE, BUT NOT EVERYONE CAN.

I UNDER-STAND...

...BUT EVEN IF BOTH MEN...ER, *MATE*, THEY WON'T MAKE ANY CHILDREN.

THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO CANNOT HAVE CHILDREN EVEN IF THEY WANT TO...

...AND THERE ARE COUPLES WHO DECIDE FROM THE VERY START THAT THEY DON'T WANT ANY KIDS.

THAT'S TRUE FOR HETEROSEXUAL COUPLES AS WELL.

THE CHILDREN WHO ARE BORN THAT AREN'T WANTED...

...ARE THEY JUST THROWN AWAY LIKE I WAS?

SAKUYA!

SAKUYA-CHAN!

SAKUYAAA!

WHERE ARE YOU?!

I'M SURE HE'S JUST OUT FOR A LITTLE WALK.

DON'T FREAK OUT.

HEY, SAKUYA!

WELL, SWEETIE YOU DID LEAVE THE WINDOW OPEN.

SO YOU'RE SAYING THIS IS MY FAULT?!

.....

AND IT RAINED ALL DAY TODAY SO I CAN'T IMAGINE HE WOULD WANT TO GO OUTSIDE.

BUT IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE HE EVEN TOUCHED HIS LUNCH.

SAKUYA!

SAKUYA-CHAN!

I'M GOING OUT TO LOOK FOR HIM.

YOU KNOW WHAT? FORGET IT. I CAN'T BE BOTHERED WITH THAT RIGHT NOW.

HOLD ON.

I'LL GO, TOO.

MAYBE HE FOUGHT WITH A STRAY AND IS HURT! MAYBE HE CAN HEAR US BUT CAN'T MOVE!

HE'S A PEACEFUL CAT. HE'S NOT ONE TO GET INTO FIGHTS.

MAYBE SOMEONE SPOTTED HIM AND KIDNAPPED HIM WHEN THEY REALIZED WHAT HE WAS WORTH!

Sigh...

HAVE YOU SEEN OUR CAT?

HE'S A CALICO WITH A SILVER COLLAR.

THAT'S GOOD. WE CAN USE THESE PHOTOS TO MAKE SOME FLIERS AS WELL.

Aw! He's so cute!

HERE!

THE COPS ARE GOING TO WANT A PICTURE OF HIM.

WAIT!

IT'S POSSIBLE. MAYBE WE SHOULD CALL THE POLICE.

THEY SAY THAT LOVE FOR A CHILD IS ENOUGH TO BIND EVEN THE MOST UNLIKELY COUPLE.

IT LOOKS LIKE YOUR MASTERS HAVE STOPPED FIGHTING LONG ENOUGH TO SEARCH FOR YOU.

I DON'T KNOW. I THINK HE SAID SOMETHING ABOUT GOING TO A HOSPITAL.

HOSPITAL ...

A BOY WHO MUST'VE WITNESSED THE ACCIDENT TOOK IT SOMEWHERE.

BOY?! WHERE?!

I SAW A CAR RUN IT OVER THIS AFTERNOON.

OH NO! THAT'S ***YOUR*** CAT?!

WHAT?!

YES!!

SWEETIE, IF WE HAVE TO WE'LL SEARCH EVERY SINGLE HOSPITAL IN TOWN!

JUST LOOK AT THEM. THEY'RE TRYING SO HARD FOR ME.

THAT'S ENOUGH FOR ME.

I DON'T MIND BEING THEIR CHILD'S REPLACEMENT FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE.

COUNT... IT'S ALL RIGHT.

I'LL GO BACK HOME.

IF YOU DON'T, THAT CHILD'S SOUL WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO MOVE TO THE AFTERLIFE.

...

NOT YET, SAKUYA. YOU MUST HOLD OUT A BIT LONGER.

BUT...

I'M ON IT.

YOUR HIGHNESS.

!!

TH-THAT'S RIGHT. THAT'S SAKUYA'S!

ARE YOU THE ONES SEARCHING FOR THE CAT THAT OWNS THIS COLLAR?

EXCUSE ME...

?

I TOOK HIM TO A NEARBY PET SHOP .

FOLLOW ME. I'LL TAKE YOU THERE.

WHERE IS HE?

THIS CAN'T BE RIGHT.

A PET SHOP IN KABUKI-CHO?

WHERE IS SA-KUYA ?!

HOW ARE HIS INJURIES?!

WELCOME TO COUNT D'S PET SHOP.

YUDY

SAKUYA ?!

?!

HE'S IN THE BACK.

I BELIEVE HE'S BEEN WAITING FOR YOU.

THIS SHOP...

HUH?

IT LOOKS LIKE A BROTHEL!

THIS ISN'T A PET SHOP AT ALL!

...

OH, HE'S IN HERE... SOMEWHERE.

PLEASE LOOK FOR HIM AT YOUR LEISURE.

WHAT'S WRONG?

D-DON'T JOKE AROUND!

WHERE IS SAKUYA?!

Hah

Hehe...

WE'VE COME TO PICK YOU UP. COME ON OUT!

SAKUYA?

SAKUYA-CHAN!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

DO YOU THINK I'M STUPID, TOURU?

OH, PLEASE. YOU CAN DROP THE ACT.

YOU COME TO PLACES LIKE THIS ONE ALL THE TIME.

WHAT IS THIS PLACE?

GOD AL-MIGHTY...

I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN GOING TO STRIP CLUBS, AND PROBABLY MORE THAN A FEW SEX CLUBS!

SO WHAT!? I ONLY STARTED AFTER YOU CHEATED ON ME!

CHEATED ON YOU?! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING AB--

YOU MAKE ALL SORTS OF EXCUSES ABOUT WORKING LATE, BUT IN REALITY YOU'RE DOWN IN KABUKI-CHO SPENDING MONEY ON HOSTS!

WELL, YOU'RE ONE TO TALK!

MAKIKO-SAN...

TOURU-SAN...

AH!

PLEASE DON'T FIGHT.

PLEASE.

IT'S ME.

IT'S SAKUYA.

AND WHO ARE YOU?

HEY...

DON'T YOU RECOG-NIZE ME?

I REALIZE IT MUST BE PRETTY HARD TO BELIEVE.

BUT I REALLY AM SAKUYA.

THAT... CAN'T...

IT CAN'T BE!

...?!

!!

MAKI-CHAN, YOU WANTED TO CALL ME "SAKURA," BUT TOURU-SAN THOUGHT IT WAS WEIRD SINCE I WAS A BOY AND STOPPED YOU.

THE FIRST TIME WE MET WAS ON A RAINY DAY, SURROUNDED BY SHEDDING CHERRY BLOSSOM TREES.

TELL YOU WHAT...

I'LL TELL YOU SOMETHING ONLY I WOULD KNOW.

THAT'S RIGHT.

THIS MORNING, YOU BOTH WERE FIGHTING ABOUT THE FACT THAT YOU WERE OUT OF TEA LEAVES.

TOURU-SAN ALWAYS MAKES SURE THE BILLS IN HIS WALLET ARE FACING THE SAME WAY.

MAKI-CHAN ALWAYS LIKES TO ADD SOY SAUCE TO HER SUNNY SIDE UP EGGS.

I'VE LONG WISHED THAT I COULD SPEAK TO YOU IN HUMAN WORDS SO THAT I COULD ASK YOU SOMETHING.

COUNT D HAS GRANTED MY WISH FOR ME.

IT'S REALLY YOU...

SAKUYA ...

OH GOD...

HA...HA HA! I ALREADY UNDERSTOOD YOUR WORDS A LONG TIME AGO.

ALTHOUGH IT WAS USUALLY AT THE LEVEL OF "I'M HUNGRY!" OR "LET'S PLAY!"

YES...! YES! ME, TOO!

I'VE ALWAYS IMAGINED HOW FUN IT WOULD BE IF I COULD TALK TO YOU, SAKUYA!

HA HA HA!

HEH HEH!

WELL, HE'S OUR CHILD. WHAT DID YOU EXPECT?

No kidding.

Doting parent

SO YOU'VE TURNED OUT TO BE A PRETTY HANDSOME ONE, HAVEN'T YOU?

SO, SAKUYA, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO ASK US?

YEAH...

YEAH... IT DOESN'T HURT ANYMORE.

BUT THE IMPORTANT THING IS, SAKUYA, ARE YOUR INJURIES OKAY?

!!

AH!

B-BUT HOW COULD YOU POSSIBLY --?

...WAS THE THING THAT YOU LOST THAT DAY...YOUR CHILD?

UM... ON THE DAY THAT YOU TOOK ME HOME...

...PROBABLY ABOUT SIX YEARS OLD.

NOW HE IS, LET'S SEE...

HE'S BEEN GETTING BIGGER... SLOWLY.

HE'S ALWAYS IN THE CORNER OF THE ROOM.

SPIRIT?!

HIS SPIRIT RESIDES IN OUR HOUSE.

...HE'S ALWAYS BEEN NEAR YOU.

BECAUSE...

MAKI?!

A... GHOST?

UGH!

WHEN YOU GO TO WORK, THE TWO OF US ALWAYS PLAY TOGETHER.

THEN ONE DAY I GOT REALLY DIZZY AS I WAS GETTING OFF THE TRAIN AND FELL DOWN THE PLATFORM STAIRS.

THE NEXT THING I REMEMBER, I WAS IN A HOSPITAL BED...AND THE DOCTOR...HE TOLD ME THAT I HAD LOST MY CHILD.

ME, TOO! I WAS SO BUSY WITH WORK THAT I NEVER NOTICED YOUR CONDITION.

I...

YOU REMEMBER, I HAD THAT PROJECT I WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR AND IT WAS KEEPING ME UP NIGHTS.

I NEVER KNEW.

BUT, AFTER ALL THAT...

HE'S BEEN IN THE HOUSE...

HE MUST HATE US!

WHEN WE FOUND YOU, SAKUYA, IT WAS LIKE YOU...LIKE YOU WERE THE REINCARNATION OF OUR BABY.

I NEVER EVEN KNEW I WAS PREGNANT...

I DON'T HATE YOU, MOMMY AND DADDY!

YOU'RE WRONG!

YOU EVEN CAME THIS FAR...

YOU...

HUH?!

YES.

YOU UNDER-STAND?

YOU WERE NEVER BORN UNWANTED AND THROWN AWAY.

I KNOW.

HUH?

SO YOU DON'T NEED TO WORRY ANYMORE EITHER, SAKUYA.

WHO KNOWS? MAYBE WE'LL COME BACK AS MOMMY AND DADDY'S CHILDREN AGAIN!

IT'S TIME. LET'S GO TOGETHER.

I DEEPLY REGRET THIS, BUT...

...WHEN SAKUYA-SAN ARRIVED AT OUR SHOP, HE HAD ALREADY...

...PASSED AWAY.

SAKUYA!!

HE'S... DEAD! WHAT'S HAPPEN-ING?

SAKUYA...?

SAKUYA?!

THEN WHAT WAS THAT JUST NOW?

WHAT?

HE WAS WORRIED ABOUT THE BOTH OF YOU.

GREATLY. AS WAS YOUR CHILD.

AS A RESULT, THEY WERE UNABLE TO MOVE ON.

SAKUYA WAS SO WORRIED THAT HE DIDN'T EVEN REALIZE WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO HIS OWN BODY.

EVEN THOUGH TIME HAS PASSED AND THE NEW FIRES OF PASSION HAVE GIVEN WAY TO FAMILIARITY...

...IF THE WARMTH OF LOVE STILL REMAINS...

...WILL BE FOREVER HAPPY ONES.

...THE LIVES BORN IN THAT HOME...

STORY 12 END

第13話／
Damnation

Kabuki-cho 1st Street

...SO SOME OF THE GIRLS WERE GOING TO CHECK OUT THAT NEW HOST CLUB. YOU DOWN, RAN-FAN?

NO, I'M SORRY. I CAN'T.

WE JUST GOT PAID...

GOOD NIGHT.

NICE WORK.

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ココ

UGH, COLD!

NO...THAT'S NOT IT AT ALL.

AH! I GOT IT! I GOT IT!

GIRL, IT'S BEEN AGES SINCE YOU'VE HUNG OUT WITH US! DO YOU HAVE A NEW MAN IN YOUR LIFE YOU HAVEN'T TOLD US ABOUT?

WHAT?

Y-YES.

I WAS FINALLY ABLE TO PAY BACK THE MAN WHO BROUGHT ME OVER HERE.

FROM NOW ON, EVERY PENNY I EARN GOES DIRECTLY TO ME.

RAN-FAN WANTS TO SAVE UP SOME MONEY SO SHE CAN GO BACK TO HER OWN COUNTRY!

I'M GOING TO WORK HARD AND...

...SAVE LOTS OF MONEY.

I WANT TO EARN MY WAY OUT OF THIS PLACE!

THAT SAID, THERE IS A NEW MAN IN MY LIFE.

WELL, SORT OF.

I'M HOME, RIKO-CHAN!

MOMMY'S HOME!

RIKO-CHAN!

RIKO-CHAN...?

SHE'S BEEN SLUGGISH SINCE I CAME BACK FROM WORK YESTERDAY.

DO YOU THINK I'VE BEEN FEEDING HER TOO MUCH?

LET ME SEE.

AH... YES, YES. I UNDER-STAND.

B-BUT, WHEN I WENT TO THE ANIMAL HOSPITAL THEY ASKED FOR MY WORK VISA!

I...

HIBER-NATING?

SHE'S HIBER-NATING.

NO, THAT'S NOT IT.

CHIPMUNKS HIBERNATE IN THE WILD.

WHEN IT BECOMES WINTER AND THE TEMPERATURE STARTS TO DROP, THEY'LL BINGE ON FOOD AND HIDE IN THEIR NEST.

COME TO THINK OF IT, THE PAST FEW DAYS SHE'S HAD A HUGE APPETITE.

SHE COLLECTED FOOD UNTIL HER BELLY WAS COMPLETELY FULL JUST TO PREPARE FOR THE WINTER...

HEH HEH! SHE'S SO GREEDY.

IS... THAT ALL?

SHE'S JUST LIKE HOW I AM RIGHT NOW.

WHEN THEY HIBERNATE, THEIR BODY TEMPERATURE DROPS FIVE DEGREES AND THEY SEEM LIKE THEY'RE HALF DEAD.

IT'S NORMAL. RIKO-CHAN IS NOT SICK AT ALL.

BUT... THAT'S GOING AGAINST THEIR NATURAL INSTINCTS, ISN'T IT?

WOULDN'T THAT BE BAD FOR HER?

.....

UM... SO THEN RIKO-CHAN WILL SLEEP UNTIL SPRING?

IN FACT, IF YOU KEEP YOUR HOME WARM, SHE'LL STAY AWAKE ALL WINTER.

NO, SHE HASN'T GONE INTO COMPLETE HIBERNATION YET.

IF YOU ASK ME, THIS CHILD IS HAPPIER SPENDING AS MUCH TIME AS POSSIBLE WITH ITS MASTER.

NOT REALLY.

HIBERNATION IS NORMAL, BUT IT HAS ITS RISKS. SOME ANIMALS NEVER WAKE UP FROM IT. HOWEVER, THE WORST THING...

...IS TO WAKE THEM UP WHEN THEY ARE IN THE MIDDLE OF THEIR DEEP SLEEP. THAT COULD BE DANGEROUS.

NOTE: Ran Fan is saying thank you in Chinese.

XIÈXIÈ, COUNT!

I'LL MAKE SURE THAT THE CAGE IS WARM EVEN WHEN I'M NOT HOME.

I UNDER-STAND!

IF SOMETHING HAPPENS, PLEASE DON'T HESITATE TO VISIT AGAIN.

COUNT D?

WELL, THEN...

I THINK IT'S ABOUT TIME TO GO.

Yay!

I'M NOT SURE IF HE'S IN THE SLAVE TRADE...

...OR DEALING DRUGS. BUT HE'S DOING SOMETHING ILLEGAL!

HURRY UP, CHIN!

Y-YES!

HE DISAPPEARED?!

DID HE REALIZE WE WERE FOLLOWING HIM?!

SUSPICIOUS!

TONIGHT, I'M FINALLY GOING TO EXPOSE D'S TRUE LINE OF WORK.

THAT CAN'T BE. THE BAKERIES ARE ALL CLOSED.

BE THAT AS IT MAY, HE SEEMED TO BE LEAVING IN A VERY HAPPY MOOD. ♡

UGH?!

TAIZUU, WE'VE LOST SIGHT OF THE COUNT.

HAS THERE ALWAYS BEEN A MARKET LIKE THIS IN KABUKI-CHO?!

WHAT IS THIS PLACE? I'VE BEEN HERE FIVE SECONDS AND I'M ALREADY GETTING A HEADACHE!

MINT PIPES! BABY SPONGE CAKE!

CHOCOLATE COVERED BANANAS!

OOH! COTTON CANDY!

CARAMEL APPLES AND COOKIES!

TAIZUU! CHIN-SAN!

COUNT, YOU...

OVER HERE. OVER HERE.

WHO KNEW THE LEADER OF THE SHANGHAI MOB HAD A SWEET TOOTH?

SOME-THING MUST BE GOING DOWN.

HEY, ISN'T THAT...

ISN'T THAT WOO-FEI RAU?

THAT'S RIGHT. THIS IS THE HANAZONO SHINTO SHRINE.

IT'S USUALLY MUCH QUIETER THAN THIS, AND FILLED WITH PLANTS, WATER AND INCENSE INSTEAD OF SNACK FOOD.

I-IS THIS SOME KIND OF FESTIVAL?

HUH? WHAT ABOUT ME?

.....

OF COURSE I AM, BUT THIS IS THE YEAR OF THE DOG.

YES. TAIZUU, EVEN YOU MUST BE FAMILIAR WITH THE ZODIAC.

ROOSTER FAIR?

BUT AS YOU CAN SEE, IT'S DIFFERENT DURING THE ROOSTER FAIR.

出口

祝七五三花園神社

おみくじ

AS A RESULT, WE'RE NOW CELEBRATING THE ROOSTER FOR THREE STRAIGHT DAYS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE YEAR OF THE DOG.

AND HERE AT THE SHRINE, THEY'VE DECIDED THAT THIS MONTH SHOULD BE USED TO CELEBRATE THE OLD JAPANESE GODS.

THE YEARS ARE ONLY A SMALL PART OF THE ZODIAC. WHEN YOU APPLY THE CELESTIAL STEM* TO THE ZODIAC, YOU DISCOVER THAT NOVEMBER BECOMES A MONTH OF CELEBRATION.

*The celestial stem is another Chinese cyclic numeral system.

MY FATHER LIKES TO TALK ABOUT GUAN YU, ANOTHER CHINESE GOD OF BUSINESS AND AGRICULTURE...

YEAH, I'M SURE THAT RAKE WILL SOLVE ALL MY PROBLEMS.

THAT ORNAMENTAL BAMBOO RAKE IS SUPPOSED TO BRING GOOD LUCK. YOU SHOULD GET ONE. PERHAPS IT WILL HELP YOUR BUSINESS GROW.

TRADITIONALLY, THE HANAZONO SHRINE IS WHERE ONE COMES TO PAY HOMAGE TO INARI, THE GOD OF INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE.

A PERSON'S FREE TO MAKE OF THESE FESTIVALS WHAT THEY WILL, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN YOU CAN'T ENJOY THEM.

SIGH... AS USUAL, YOU'RE SO PREDICTABLE.

I'M ACTUALLY PRETTY GOOD AT THAT.

OOH! YOU CAN WIN GOLDFISH IN THAT BOOTH!

...BUT I DON'T BELIEVE IN DEPENDING ON GODS FOR LUCK!

IT'S QUITE A NICE GESTURE, ACTUALLY.

OTHERWISE, THERE WOULD SURELY BE FIGHTS BETWEEN THE RIVAL GANGS.

ALL THE AREA HEAVIES ARE HERE AT THE FESTIVAL. THEY'RE HERE TO MAKE SURE THEIR MEN BEHAVE THEMSELVES.

THAT CAN'T BE HELPED.

I DON'T THINK I COULD ENJOY A FESTIVAL HERE.

THE PEOPLE HERE ALL LOOK PRETTY SHADY.

HMM.

I SEE.

...IN THE INTEREST OF ILLEGALLY SMUGGLING WOMEN IN TO WORK FOR HIM. AND YOU CAN GUESS WHAT KIND OF WORK I'M TALKING ABOUT.

THAT MAN BEHIND US GOES TO RURAL AREAS IN CHINA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA WAVING MONEY AROUND AND SPOUTING LIES...

THERE'S MORE THAN JUST YAKUZA HERE.

THAT'S SOME TOUGH TALK, MATE. AND HERE I THOUGHT YOU ONLY BEAT ON WOMEN.

NO, NO. I DIDN'T MEAN TO--

WHAT'CHOO LOOKIN' AT, MAN?

DO WE GOT SOME SORT OF PROBLEM HERE?

I RUN A LEGITIMATE BUSINESS. AND YOU MADE THIS PERSONAL WHEN YOU PICKED ON MY FRIEND.

Easy, easy! No need to get so worked up!

WHAT DID YOU SAY?! YOU KNOW, I'VE HEARD SOME FUCKED UP STORIES ABOUT YOU, TOO! WE MAKIN' THIS PERSONAL BETWEEN US?

THE FUCK YOU SAY?! YOU LOOKIN' TO GET CAPPED TONIGHT?!

AND YOU'RE THE PIECE OF SHIT WHO'S STEALING TEENAGE GIRLS FROM CHINA AND TURNING THEM INTO STREETWALKERS!

YEAH, I'VE HEARD ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS. YOU'RE THE BIG MAN FROM CHINA THAT'S PUTTING THE SQUEEZE ON ALL THE FAMILIES IN TOKYO.

THAT'S ENOUGH! NEED I REMIND YOU THAT YOU ARE IN FRONT OF THE GODS?! IF YOU'D LIKE TO FIGHT, ***DO IT ELSEWHERE!***

Shit.

LADY SASUKE.

I KNOW WHAT YOU LOOK LIKE, BIG MAN. SO I RECOMMEND YOU GROW EYES IN THE BACK OF YOUR HEAD.

HMPH!

TRY IT, FREAK! I'LL KNOCK THOSE SUNGLASSES CLEAN OFF!

...I SEE YOU'RE STILL CHOOSING FOOD OVER FLOWERS.

SO, COUNT...

IT'S NOTHING.

IT'S BEEN FAR TOO LONG, LADY SASUKE. I'M SORRY FOR CAUSING TROUBLE.

祝 七五三 花

AND WHO IS YOUR HIGH-SPIRITED FRIEND?

Hee hee!

WHO KNEW THE HEIR TO THE RAU FORTUNE WAS SO GENEROUS?!

Chin up, Rau-san!

There's a gentleman for ya!

...I UNDER-STAND.

NO. NOT FOR AWHILE.

BY THE WAY, COUNT D... HAVE YOU SEEN TAYUU SHIRATAKI-SAN?

I SEE...

I WILL MAKE SURE TO VISIT HER LATER.

YOU KNOW, THIS MAY VERY WELL BE HER LAST YEAR.

COULD YOU AT LEAST SEE HER ONE LAST TIME?

入場料
大人 800円
小人 500円
幼児 300円
THE SNAKE WOMAN
女
JACK THE RIPPER
切り裂きジャック
見世物
ようこそ
ここに集う奇形人
THIS?
IT'S A SIDE SHOW. YET ANOTHER STAPLE OF FAIRS AND FESTIVALS.
SIDE SHOWS BEGAN AS ENTERTAINMENT FOR COMMONERS BACK IN THE EDO PERIOD.
AT THEIR PEAK, IT'S SAID THERE WERE OVER 300 SIDE SHOW GROUPS IN JAPAN ALONE.
BUT NOW THEIR NUMBERS ARE DWINDLING.
THESE SHOWS USED TO PUT DEFORMED AND HANDICAPPED PEOPLE ON DISPLAY AND DESCRIBE THEM AS MONSTERS AND FREAKS OF NATURE!
BUT NOT ALL THE PERFORMERS WERE THERE FOR THEIR TALENTS.
I KNOW WHAT A SIDE SHOW IS. THEY'RE NOT UNIQUE TO ASIA. THEY EXISTED IN EUROPE AND AMERICA AS WELL.

YES. I'D LIKE TICKETS FOR THREE PLEASE...

ONCE AGAIN, THESE SHOWS ARE WHAT YOU MAKE OF THEM.

YOU TAKE THINGS TOO SERIOUSLY, TAIZUU.

THAT'S THE SAVAGE SISTER OF THE SICKLE?

WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?!

HUMAN KAPPA? HE'S JUST A DUDE EATING A KAPPA ROLL!

IS THIS *REALLY* WORTH GETTING UPSET OVER?

LIKE I SAID, IT'S ALL IN WHAT YOU MAKE OF IT!

THESE ARE JUST CORNY PUNS!

THIS IS IDIOTIC! SHE'S CLEARLY JUST SIGNALING THE DOG!

5-3=

WOOF! WOOF!

THE LEARNING DOG...

THE HUMAN PUMP...

TAIZUU ...

I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THIS!

ALL RIGHT, TAYUU! WOO!

I'LL TRY TO KEEP MY EXPECTATIONS IN CHECK.

SHE'S PRETTY POPULAR.

THE MAIN EVENT OF OUR SHOW!

NOW, THE MOMENT YOU'VE ALL BEEN WAITING FOR...

THAT SERPENTINE SENSATION, THE AMAZING SNAKE WOMAN!

GIVE A BIG HAND TO TAYUU SHIRATAKI!

WHAT IS THIS?!

SHE'S A WRINKLED OLD CRONE! SHE LOOKS *NOTHING* LIKE THE POSTER OUT FRONT!

MAN, SHUT UP!

SHHHH!

UH-

SOMETHING TELLS ME BUSTING A HIP ISN'T A PART OF THE WHITE WATERFALL.

SHE'S ABOUT TO FALL OVER.

TAIZOU!

AND NEXT, THE WHITE WATERFALL...

OOOH...

FIRST, I'LL PERFORM THE DANCE OF THE SNAKE.

AND THE LAST IS THE BLAZE OF HADES!

TAYUU SHIRATAKI-SAN IS UNBELIEV-ABLE!

ALL RIGHT!

-HAAN

HMPH.

TERRIBLE. THE OLD BAG'S ACT IS MORE ANCIENT THAN SHE IS.

...COUNT?!

TAYUU SHIRATAKI STILL SEEMS QUITE ENERGETIC.

IT'S SUCH A WASTE TO THINK SHE'S RETIRING THIS YEAR.

THEY MUST BE SOME OF HER OLDEST FANS.

I'D IMAGINE THAT 30 YEARS AGO, SHE WAS JUST AS BEAUTIFUL AS THE POSTER.

WITHOUT SHIRATAKI-SAN, I WONDER HOW WELL THIS LITTLE SHOW WILL FARE?

WHO KNOWS? SIDE SHOWS AREN'T AS POPULAR AS THEY USED TO BE.

...

HUH?

GRR...

OH, MY... IT'S REALLY LATE.

TAIZUU, LET'S GO HOME.

BUT THINGS AROUND HERE ARE JUST STARTING TO PICK UP!

I WONDER IF HE'S DRUNK.

HE STINKS. I THINK HE'S HOMELESS.

HELLO, OVER THERE.

BUT IF HE STAYS HERE ALL NIGHT, HE'LL FREEZE TO DEATH.

GRR...

GUH...

AKOOL

COUNT, LEAVE THAT GUY ALONE.

I BOUGHT THESE, BUT NOW I'M NO LONGER HUNGRY. DO YOU WANT THEM?

SNFF SNFF

snif

snif

HERE. DON'T BE SCARED.

THESE YUM YUMS ARE DELISH!

THANKS!

EASY, NOW. THERE'S PLENTY. NO NEED TO RUSH.

SUUUURE, MATE! I'LL TAKE 'EM!

DELISH?

YUM YUMS?

AND FROM SHONAN, NO LESS!

A UNI-VERSITY STUDENT?!

UNFORTUNATELY, I DRANK A BIT TOO MUCH AT THE CELEBRATION PARTY AND MISSED MY TRAIN.

SURE THING, MATE! IN FACT, I LED THE CHEERING SQUAD FOR OUR BASEBALL TEAM THIS VERY DAY.

I'M RAITA TAKEDA. I'M A FOURTH YEAR FROM SHONAN UNIVERSITY.

THANKS FOR THE EATS.

WELL, THAT EXPLAINS THE SMELL.

CHEERING SQUAD?

THAT'S RIGHT. THESE CLOTHES HAVE BEEN WORN BY EVERY CHEERING SQUAD LEADER FOR THE LAST 40 YEARS.

And the smell doesn't help.

THE THOUGHT OF WEARING A SHAGGY OLD COSTUME AND CHEERING PEOPLE ON PROBABLY WOULDN'T HOLD MUCH APPEAL TO THE YOUNG JAPANESE OF TODAY.

THAT DOESN'T SURPRISE ME.

UNFOR-TUNATELY, THAT TRADI-TION ENDS WITH ME.

WHEN I GRADUATE, THERE IS NO THIRD YEAR TO TAKE MY PLACE, SO THE CLUB WILL BE DISBANDED.

I CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT THE SCHOOL, BUT...

...I CAN SAY THAT YOU SHOULDN'T LOSE HOPE. I RUN A PET SHOP IN NEO CHINATOWN.

PERHAPS YOU'VE HEARD OF IT? REGARDLESS, YOU SHOULD STOP BY FOR A VISIT ONE OF THESE DAYS.

IT WAS MY RESPONSIBILITY TO TRAIN A JUNIOR TO TAKE MY PLACE, BUT I'M AFRAID I FAILED AT THAT ONE, MY FRIENDS.

YOU'VE GOT IT. THE SENIORITY RANKING IS STRICT AND THE TRAINING IS HARD.

PLUS, THERE JUST AREN'T AS MANY STUDENTS ENROLLING IN COLLEGE THESE DAYS.

I-I WILL! THANKS!

I WILL **NEVER** UNDERSTAND WHAT D SEES IN THESE PEOPLE.

FIRST THE OLD LADY AND NOW THIS DRUNK, CHEERLEADING HIPPY.

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ソカ

IS EVERYONE HERE?

MAMA-SAN!

LOOK AT THAT. SHE'S JUST LIKE A MOTHER.

WELL, RAISING A PET CHIPMUNK IS ABOUT AS CLOSE TO *THAT* AS I HOPE SHE COMES.

THANK GOODNESS, RIKO-CHAN.

YOU LOOK REALLY HEALTHY.

ソカ

...YOU'LL ALL BE DEPORTED.

IF THEY FIND OUT THAT YOUR PASSPORTS ARE FAKE...

WHAT?!

RAID?!

THERE IS TO BE AN IMMIGRATION RAID SOON.

I JUST RECEIVED WORD FROM ONE OF MY SOURCES.

I KNOW.

I'LL HOLD ON TO YOUR MONEY UNTIL THE RAID IS COMPLETE.

YOU MAY WANT TO GIVE ME YOUR BANK CARDS AS WELL.

TH-THAT CAN'T BE!

THIS IS A REAL PROBLEM, MAMA!

YOU SHOULD CLEAR OUT THIS ROOM.

ANY OF YOUR MONEY OR POSSESSIONS THAT THEY FIND WILL BE CONFISCATED.

MAMA-SAN!

PLEASE TAKE CARE OF IT!

IT'S IMPORTANT THIS MONEY STAY SAFE.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT A THING.

WHAT?!

BUT...

IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT. WHEN THE RAID IS OVER, I'LL RETURN EVERYTHING TO YOU.

LEAVE IT TO ME, RAN-FAN.

バタン

ALL RIGHT, NOBODY MOVE!

THIS IS THE TOKYO IMMI-GRATION POLICE.

EVERYONE IS TO STAY WHERE THEY ARE AND GIVE US YOUR FULL COOPERATION, PLEASE!

NO, THAT'S NOT TRUE. LET ME MAKE THAT CLEAR, WE HAVE NO INTEREST IN YOUR PERSONAL BELONGINGS.

IS... IS THAT TRUE?

WE WERE TOLD THAT ALL OUR MONEY AND VALUABLES WOULD BE CONFISCATED.

I'D LIKE ALL THE WOMEN'S NAMES AND HOMETOWNS.

OH, AND PLEASE LOG ANY CONTRA-BAND YOU CONFISCATE.

DO NOT WORRY. ANYTHING WE CONFISCATE THAT IS NOT ILLEGAL...

...WILL BE RETURNED TO YOU AT YOUR RELEASE OR WHEN YOU RETURN TO YOUR COUNTRY.

WHAT?!

THEN, OUR MONEY...?!

WHAT?! YOU'RE KIDDING!

WE'RE JUST LOOKING FOR DRUGS OR OTHER ILLEGAL MATERIAL. SOUNDS LIKE YOU WERE TRICKED, MISS.

FOR NOW, I NEED ALL OF YOU TO GET ON THE BUS.

YOU CAN TELL US ABOUT IT LATER.

LADY, GET ON THE BUS *RIGHT NOW!*

A PET?

CAN I GO BACK AND GET HER?

SHE'S IN MY APART-MENT.

UM... I HAVE A PET.

RIKO-CHAN!!

RIKO-CHAN!

HEY! STOP RIGHT THERE!

I'M SORRY, BUT YOU CAN'T BRING PETS INTO THE IMMIGRATION BUILDING.

IF I DON'T TAKE CARE OF HER, SHE'LL DIE!

LET *GO!*

BUT...BUT WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO RIKO-CHAN?!

IT LOOKS LIKE ALL THEIR BANK CARDS, MONEY AND VALUABLES WERE STOLEN, JUST LIKE THEY SAID. AS IF THESE GIRLS DON'T HAVE IT BAD ENOUGH, NOW THEY'RE BEING CONNED OUT OF WHAT LITTLE THEY HAVE.

HUH?

THIS MUST BE THE PET THAT THE GIRL FROM YESTERDAY WAS TALKING ABOUT.

IS IT A HAMSTER?!

I'M NOT SURE. AW, SHIT.

WHATEVER IT IS, IT'S DEAD.

YES, SIR.

WELL, THIS IS UNFORTUNATE, BUT IT COULDN'T BE HELPED.

WILL YOU DISPOSE OF THIS?

AND YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T BELIEVE IN LUCK.

I DON'T! IT'S JUST A COIN-CIDENCE.

TENANTS THROUGHOUT THE BUILDING ARE REPORTING AN INCREASE IN SALES OF AT LEAST 20% THIS WEEK.

KNOCK

KNOCK

THERE'S NO ONE HERE.

HMM ...

YES?

I WONDER IF IT'S THAT COLLEGE STUDENT FROM THE OTHER DAY.

YES. IT'S OPEN. PLEASE COME IN.

?

A CUSTOMER? NOW?

KNOCK

WHAT HAP-PENED ?!

WHO ARE...

C-COUNT...

HUFF!

HUFF!

HUFF!

THAT SON...OF A...B-BITCH DAITOKU...

HE TOOK ALL OUR VALUABLES.

SHE... SHE... WAS TAKEN.

HELP... ME.

...THAT IS NOT NEEDED.

YES.

CALL AN AMBU-LANCE!

PLEASE SAVE... H-HER...

I'M AFRAID SHE'S... WELL...

HE'S THAT ASSHOLE WHO PICKED A FIGHT WITH US AT THE ROOSTER FAIR.

DID SHE SAY DAITOKU?

ARE YOU GOING TO THAT FESTIVAL AGAIN?

COUNT?

TONIGHT IS TAYUU SHIRATAKI-SAN'S LAST PERFORMANCE.

NO REASON, REALLY. I'M JUST TRYING TO...OPEN MY MIND A BIT.

I THOUGHT YOU HAD NO INTEREST IN FESTIVALS. WHY THE SUDDEN CHANGE OF OPINION?

COUNT D!

OH?

?

BUT YOU BROUGHT A GUEST?

IT'LL BE FINE.

THE PREPARATIONS ARE ALL READY.

I'M SORRY FOR ALL OF THE TROUBLE.

LADY SASUKE.

THEN FOLLOW ME, GENTLEMEN.

WAS THE PATH THIS LONG?

WHAT?! THESE GATES...

MY EARS ARE RINGING...

AGH!

I FEEL DIZZY...

COUNT?!

IT'S JUST A BIT FURTHER.

NOW...

...WE HAVE ARRIVED.

THERE ARE SHOPS, BUT...

THE SELLERS...

?!

AND LOOK OVER HERE, THERE ARE PLENTY OF PEOPLE.

SEE, OVER THERE...

YOU'RE WRONG, TAIZUU.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

THE CUSTOMERS...

NO ONE IS HERE!

祝 七五三

IS THE FESTIVAL NOT YET OPEN?

花園神社

?!

TAKE ONE, TAIZUU.

A FOX MASK?

Heh heh...

HELLO, IS ANYONE HERE?!

WHAT THE FUCK? HEY! WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON HERE?!

HEH.

LET ME GUESS...

YOU ... WHOLE FUCKING PLACE IS EMPTY, AND YET I FIND YOU.

...THIS SUPPOSED TO SHOW ME HOW BIG AND POWERFUL YOU ARE? EH?

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!

WOO-FEI...

DAITOKU...

I'M NOT GOING TO SAY I'M NOT IMPRESSED.

MY CELL PHONE HAS BEEN OUT OF RANGE.

AND WE CAN'T FIND THE STREETS TO GET OUT OF HERE.

I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THIS!

WHAT?!

YOU DROP A SHITLOAD OF YEN TO RESERVE THE WHOLE FESTIVAL FOR YOURSELF, JUST TO TRY TO PROVE TO ME THAT YOU CALL THE SHOTS.

...SO I SUGGEST YOU ALL MIND YOUR TONGUES.

YOU ARE CURRENTLY BEFORE THE GODS...

THAT'S ENOUGH, EVERYONE.

OOH, THE SHOW IS ABOUT TO START!

SEE THE INCREDIBLE WOLF MAN, JUST LIKE IN THE MOVIE!

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! COME ONE, COME ALL!

WE SHOULD HURRY!

BUT DAITOKU, DARLING ...

IT LOOKS LIKE THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE THERE.

TO PAY GOOD MONEY JUST TO SEE A BUNCH OF SIGHT GAGS AND PAST-THEIR-PRIME CIRCUS FREAKS...

A SIDE SHOW? HOW STUPID.

ミーン ミーン

SHIT!

TICKETS FOR TWO ADULTS, PLEASE.

I NEED TWO GODDAMN TICKETS!

...PLEASE.

大見世物小屋

白瀧太夫

マイタチ

LADIES AND GENTLE-MEN!

MAY I INTRODUCE TO YOU, OUR VERY OWN KAMAITACHI WIND DEMON!

DEMON MY ASS.

THEY'RE JUST TRYING TO BE FUNNY. IT'S PROBABLY SOME CUTE LITTLE GOLDFISH OR SOMETHING.

K

A

A

A

A

A!

PANDA PUNCH!

NYAA!

Is this the same show?

GREHH H!

THE SHOW'S JUST GOT A GOOD SPECIAL EFFECTS BUDGET.

IT'S NOTHING! JUST A BUNCH OF STUPID TRICKS.

AAAH!

WHAT IS THIS?!

HEY, MATES!

WE'RE PLEASE TO WELCOME A LEGENDARY GUEST PERFORMER! HE'S THE TRAGIC LEADER OF A WELL-KNOWN CHEERING SQUAD...

AND NEXT, A LAST-MINUTE ADDITION!

KAFF!

I HEARD ABOUT THIS FINAL PERFOR-MANCE AND ALL...

...AND I COULDN'T RESIST SENDING OUT TAYUU SHIRATAKI-SAN WITH A PROPER CHEER!

HERE GOES...

YOU'VE GOTTA BE KIDDING ME!

AAAH!

GOD-DAMN! TURN DOWN THE FUCKING VOLUME!

HURRAH!!!

HURRAH!!!

SHIRATAKI!!!

GW

HURRAH!!!

R

HE'S THE LAST OF AN ENDANGERED SPECIES, STANDING HONORABLY ALONE.

AN ISOLATED BUT NOBLE BEAST.

HE'S SO BEAUTI-FUL...

ヤンヤ yay!

ヤンヤ yaaay!

I'VE SEEN THIS OLD BITCH BEFORE.

SHE'S BEEN DOING THIS STUPID SHOW SINCE I WAS A KID.

AT LAST, THE MOMENT YOU'VE ALL BEEN WAITING FOR!

AS YOU KNOW, TO-NIGHT MARKS THE LAST PERFOR-MANCE OF...

...OUR STAR AND BELOVED SNAKE WOMAN, TAYUU SHIRATAKI. GIVE HER A BIG ROUND OF APPLAUSE!

Snake Woman

Woo hoo!

Shirataki-san!

ズルル

WHOA!

SHE LOOKS EVEN WORSE THAN SHE DID THE LAST TIME!

SHH!

IT HAS ALWAYS MEANT SO MUCH TO ME, AND I TRULY, TRULY THANK YOU.

THANK YOU, ALL. TODAY WE WILL BE SAYING GOODBYE, BUT BEFORE WE DO, I'D LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR ALL OF THE YEARS OF SUPPORT.

I HOPE THAT YOU CONTINUE TO SHOW ME THE SAME WARM AND ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT.

HUH?

...I WILL BEGIN MY JOB AS A *NEW* SHIRATAKI.

STARTING TOMORROW...

Waaah!

All right!

Yay!

Woo-!!

Hurray!!!

?!

EVEN IF...

...THIS BODY OF MINE DIS-APPEARS...

MY ROLE ON THIS EARTH WILL NEVER BE FINISHED...

EVEN AFTER A HUNDRED YEARS ...

...OR A THOU-SAND...

...UNTIL YOU RETURN MY MONEY!

I WILL CHASE YOU BOTH TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH IF YOU DON'T GIVE IT BACK!

AAAA

TAIZUU?

TAIZUU!

GOOD MORNING.

HM...?

YOU WENT BACK TO THE ROOSTER FESTIVAL, DIDN'T YOU?

DID I? I CAN'T...

SAKE?

A BIT TOO MUCH SAKE LAST NIGHT, SIR?

THE COUNT DID?!

THE COUNT BROUGHT YOU HOME. YOU COULD BARELY WALK.

I CAN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING AFTER SHIRATAKI!!

BUT FOR SOME REASON, THE COUNT WAS MUMBLING THAT HE LOOKED BETTER BEFORE...

...

HE CLEANED UP QUITE NICELY.

HI AGAIN, MATE! RECOGNIZE ME? I'VE BEEN JOB HUNTING.

WELL, NOT REALLY.

...FROM A FEW DAYS AGO.

ACTUALLY, YOU WERE CARRIED IN BY THAT UNIVERSITY STUDENT...

YOU MEAN THAT STINKY GUY?!

ACTUALLY, THAT'S NOT QUITE CORRECT. THEY TURNED THEMSELVES IN.

OH, AND ONE MORE THING...

DAITOKU AND HIS LADY PARTNER HAVE BEEN ARRESTED.

.....

...AND IN THE PROCESS WOUND UP CONFESSING TO EVERYTHING THEY HAD DONE. THE BEST NEWS IS THAT THE WOMEN IN THE IMMIGRATIONS OFFICE WILL BE GETTING THEIR MONEY BACK.

...SHOUTING SOMETHING ABOUT A KILLER SNAKE WOMAN...

THE WORD IS THEY ENTERED THE STATION...

WHEN SPRING-ROLLS AROUND?...

...I AM SURE THAT RAN-FAN WILL COME PICK YOU UP.

...AND HAVE A GOOD NIGHT.

UNTIL THEN, TAKE YOUR TIME...

STORY 13 END

WELCOME TO COUNT D'S PET SHOP...

FOR FAMILIES IN SEARCH OF A NEW MEMBER...

AND FOR SOULS LOOKING FOR A PARTNER IN LIFE...

BUT ALSO FOR THE ONES WHO WISH TO RID THEMSELVES FROM THIS WORLD

第14話／Death Mask

BRAVO!

出口
階段室内

UH, PARDON ME... BUT ARE YOU HONOKA MISAKI-SAN?

AAAH! IT'S THE REAL THING!!

OH, YES.

HUH?

HEY, ISN'T THAT HONOKA MISAKI?

HUH?! WHERE, WHERE?!

I'M SORRY, BUT I'M HERE TODAY FOR PRIVATE REASONS...

YOUR LAST MOVIE WAS SO AMAZING!

CAN I TAKE A PICTURE WITH YOU?

HUH?! IS THAT...?!

COULD I PLEASE HAVE YOUR AUTO-GRAPH?

DEFINITELY. THAT HAT AND SUNGLASSES CAN'T FOOL ME.

SHE'S A LOT THINNER THAN SHE LOOKS ON TELEVISION.

HUH?! WHERE DID SHE GO?

DO YOU HAVE YOUR CAMERA WITH YOU?

...

IT'S HONOKA MISAKI, THE ACTRESS!

WHAT? SERIOUSLY?

WHERE, WHERE?! I WANT TO GET AN AUTO-GRAPH, TOO!

店物寵

Closed

MY, IT'S DELICIOUS...

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

IS THIS REALLY ALL RIGHT?

YES. I WAS JUST ABOUT TO TAKE A TEA BREAK, ANYWAY.

...AND THREE CAGES OF BIRDS.

SORRY, COUNT D, BUT I ALREADY HAVE TWO DOGS, ONE CAT...

IS THAT SO?

...AS WELL AS A FEW CRAZY THINGS THAT BARELY PASS THE C.I.T.E.S. LIST.

MY SHOP CARRIES POPULAR PETS LIKE DOGS AND CATS...

THIS IS...

...A PET SHOP?

OH, YES.

HUH?

HEY.

...

COUNT, FOR THE LAST TIME, YOU ARE TO REMAIN OPEN DURING STANDARD BUSINESS--!!

SHE WAS JUST SPOTTED BY A GROUP OF FANS AT THE ROKUROU THEATER. OUR SECURITY TEAM ALERTED ME THAT SHE MIGHT BE IN THE BUILDING.

TAIZUU!

D, IS THIS A CUS-TOMER?

ACTRESS?!

THAT WOMAN IS A FAMOUS ACTRESS.

OR IS SHE ANOTHER ONE OF YOUR PROS-TITU--?

I'M SORRY. I DIDN'T MEAN TO CAUSE SUCH A DISTURB-ANCE.

I'M SHOOTING A MOVIE WHERE FOR ONE SCENE I PERFORM IN A BEIJING OPERA.

I THOU-GHT IT MIGHT HELP ME TO SEE THE REAL THING.

I'M MISAKI, NICE TO MEET YOU.

Kuff!

I APOLO-GIZE FOR MY RUDE-NESS.

I AM WOO-FEI RAU, THE OWNER OF NEO CHINATOWN.

I HOPE YOU ENJOYED IT, BUT DID IT HELP?

WELL, OUR THEATER HOSTS THE BEST BEIJING OPERA OUTSIDE OF CHINA. ALL OF THE ACTORS ARE FROM EITHER SHANGHAI OR BEIJING.

HUH. I NEVER KNEW THAT.

THAT'S RIGHT. SHE WAS A PART OF A BEIJING OPERA GROUP WHEN SHE WAS IN SHANGHAI JUST BEFORE THE WAR.

AH! I READ ABOUT THAT MOVIE! YOU'RE PLAYING KOU-RAN LEE, RIGHT? SHE WAS ONE OF MY FATHER'S FAVORITE ACTRESSES.

YOU TELL ME.

I THINK IT WAS SOME-THING LIKE... THIS?

I must save my husband's life.

It doesn't matter what happens to me.

BRAVO!

AMAZING...

AW... THANK YOU.

AS EXPECTED OF A GREAT ACTRESS.

YOUR PAI-YAN WAS PERFECT.

HAVE YOU REALLY ONLY SEEN IT ONCE?

WE'LL TALK TO THE THEATER DIRECTOR ABOUT PER-FORMING HAO BETSUHIME FOR YOU.

OH, MY!

YES!

CHIN.

UNFOR-TUNATELY, THE OPERA THAT I'LL BE PARTICI-PATING IN IS HAO BETSUHIME, NOT HAKUJADEN.

ARE YOU SURE? IT SEEMS LIKE A LOT JUST FOR ME...

...SO WE'LL MAKE SURE HE STAGES A PRIVATE PERFOR-MANCE JUST FOR YOU.

OF COURSE, IT WOULD NOT DO TO HAVE YOU MOBBED BY YOUR FANS AGAIN...

AND HONOKA MISAKI-SAN...

...IF YOU EVER CHANGE YOUR MIND...

...AND FIND YOURSELF IN THE MARKET FOR ANOTHER PET, PLEASE VISIT ANY-TIME.

YOU ARE VERY WEL-COME.

WELL, I SHOULD BE GOING.

THANK YOU FOR THE TEA, COUNT D.

WHETHER YOU SEEK A PET FOR PROTEC-TION...

...OR TO JUST REMAIN LOYAL TO YOU THROUGH-OUT THE YEARS AHEAD...

...I WILL HAVE ONE WAITING FOR YOU.

KILL ME

ARE YOU OKAY? AND YOU JUST MOVED INTO A NEW HIGH-SECURITY APARTMENT, TOO...

IT'S OKAY. IT MUST BE THE WORK OF A STALKER OR A DIE HARD FAN.

CREEPY.

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT HAPPENED AGAIN!

I'M JUST GLAD THAT THEY WEREN'T HURT.

THE DOGS AREN'T THE ONES AT FAULT.

DID YOU EVEN BARK AT THE GUY WHO DID THIS?

YOU GUYS...

WORTH-LESS MUTTS.

I'M SORRY. CALLING YOU AT THIS HOUR--

KILL ME

I'LL CALL THE POLICE.

OF COURSE, THAT DOESN'T CHANGE THE FACT THAT IT WAS FORCED ENTRY.

I MEAN, THIS ISN'T REALLY A THREAT...

I DON'T GET IT. WHY DOES IT SAY "KILL ME"? IT SHOULD SAY "KILL YOU," SHOULDN'T IT?

I CAN'T SAY FOR CERTAIN YET.

ANYWAY, HERE'S WHAT I'D LIKE TO DO...

YOU DO?

WELL, WHO IS IT?!

WAIT!

LET'S NOT MAKE A BIG DEAL OUT OF THIS.

HONOKA-SAN, YOU--

I THINK ...

I THINK I KNOW WHO MIGHT HAVE DONE THIS.

MY HEART WILL NOT CHANGE!

I'M CALLING LUNCH, PEOPLE! SEE YOU IN AN HOUR!

GOOD WORK, MISAKI-SAN!

CUT!

THANK YOU.

NO, I'LL STAY ON THE BUS.

WERE YOU GOING TO RETURN TO THE HOTEL?

THEN I'LL PREPARE SOME TEA.

AAAAH!

MISAKI-SAN?!

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!

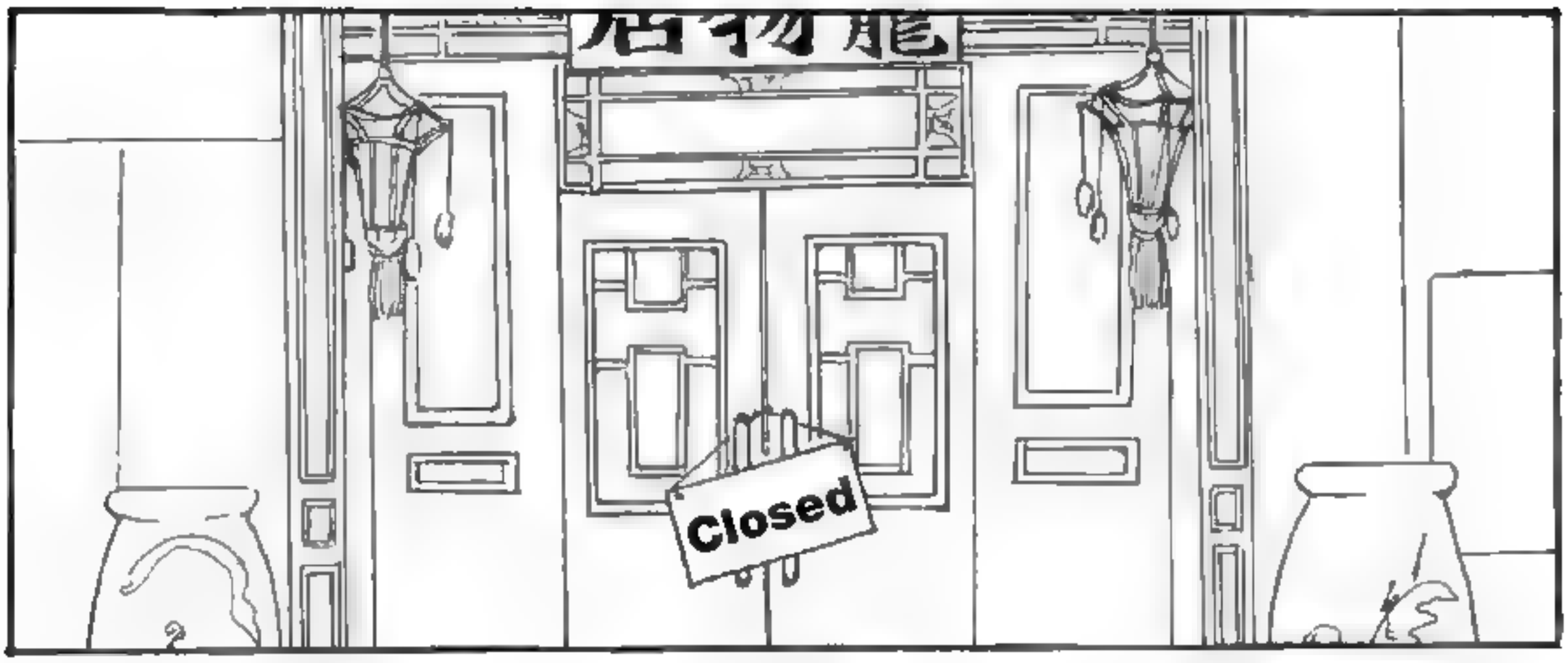
.....

S-SOMEONE PUSHED ME... FROM BEHIND.

FROM BE-HIND?

THERE'S NO ONE THERE.

THAT'S IMPOS-SIBLE!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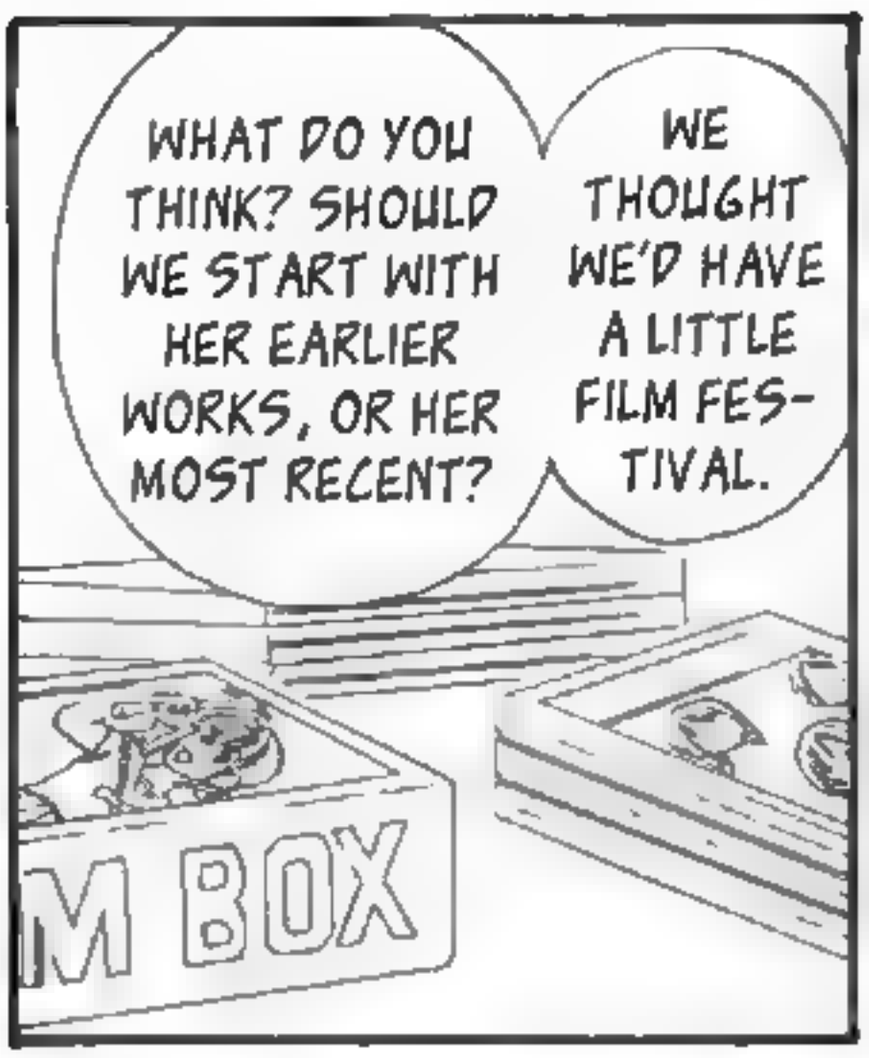
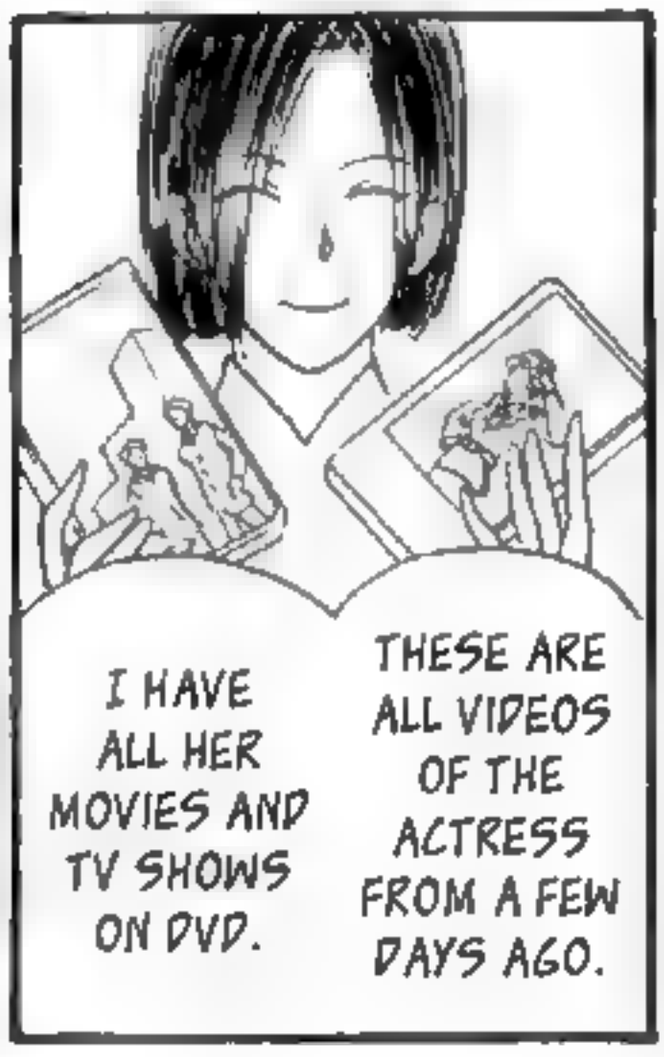

WHAT DO YOU THINK? SHOULD WE START WITH HER EARLIER WORKS, OR HER MOST RECENT?
WE THOUGHT WE'D HAVE A LITTLE FILM FES-TIVAL.
M BOX


I HAVE ALL HER MOVIES AND TV SHOWS ON DVD.
THESE ARE ALL VIDEOS OF THE ACTRESS FROM A FEW DAYS AGO.

HUH? CHIN, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?!

HERE WE GO.
I GUESS I'LL CHOOSE THEN.
I DON'T CARE!
DO WHAT-EVER YOU WANT!

THIS IS A MOVIE FROM THREE YEARS AGO.

SHE'S PLAYING A TEACHER AT A WOMEN'S HIGH SCHOOL DURING THE WAR IN JAPAN.

SHE LOOKS LIKE A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT PERSON!

SHE FIRST APPEARED IN COMMERCIALS AND ON SOME TV SHOWS, WHERE SHE GAINED A REPUTATION AS A GIFTED CHILD ACTRESS.

SHE PREFERS CHALLENGING ROLES TO CUTE, SAFE ONES.

SHE'S PLAYED A YOUNG DELINQUENT, A YAKUZA'S WIFE AND EVEN A MURDERER. SHE'S WON ALL SORTS OF AWARDS AND IS EQUALLY ADEPT AT BOTH COMEDY AND DRAMA.

THE DVD INCLUDES A BIO ABOUT HONOKA-SAN. SHE'S 28 YEARS OLD, BUT SHE FIRST STARTED ACTING WHEN SHE WAS SIX.

BUT!!

NO KIDDING.

SHE IS CURRENTLY ONE OF JAPAN'S MOST SOUGHT AFTER STARS.

UNFORTUNATELY, SHORTLY AFTER HER FOLLOWING FILM WRAPPED...

...SHE STARTED HAVING AN AFFAIR WITH ANOTHER ACTOR.

SHE FILED FOR DIVORCE FROM HER HUSBAND, AND STOLE HER NEW FLAME AWAY FROM HIS WIFE OF OVER TEN YEARS.

HER LOVE LIFE HAS BEEN AS DRAMATIC AS ONE OF HER MOVIES.

WHEN SHE WAS 18, SHE MARRIED THE YOUNG MAN WHO CO-STARRED WITH HER IN "TAKE ME TO TOKYO." YOU REMEMBER THAT MOVIE, DON'T YOU?

THAT'S HAPPENED THREE TIMES IN HER LIFE, ACTUALLY.

HER IMAGE HAS CERTAINLY TAKEN A BRUISING FROM IT...

...BUT SHE SEEMS TO KEEP AUDIENCES IN HER FAVOR BY PORTRAYING HERSELF AS AN EVERYDAY, DOWN-TO-EARTH GIRL.

IN OTHER WORDS, SOMEONE WHO MAKES MISTAKES IN LIFE, BOTH IN CAREER AND IN LOVE.

SHE PUTS SO MUCH OF HERSELF INTO HER ROLES...

...THAT SHE TENDS TO BECOME A BIT LIKE HER CHARACTERS IN REAL LIFE.

THIS ISN'T ALWAYS A GOOD THING. ONCE, WHEN FILMING A MOVIE ABOUT A YOUNG GIRL WITH ANOREXIA, HONOKA-SAN'S DOCTOR HAD TO SHUT DOWN FILMING WHEN SHE LOST OVER 22 POUNDS!

IT'S THOUGHT THAT SHE MIGHT BE UP FOR HER FIRST ACADEMY AWARD WHEN HER KOU-RAN LEE FILM IS RELEASED.

...SHE EVENTUALLY CAUGHT THE ATTENTION OF HOLLYWOOD, AND FOR THE LAST FEW YEARS, MANY OF HER FILMS HAVE BEEN AMERICAN PRODUCTIONS.

AS HER NOTORIETY GREW IN JAPAN...

I SEE.

I BELIEVE WE SAW A BIT OF THAT ROLE-PLAYING YESTERDAY. WHEN WE MET HONOKA-SAN, SHE WAS VERY MUCH THE GREAT SHOWA PERIOD ACTRESS.

I BELIEVE IT'S WHAT CAUSED HER TO BE RECOGNIZED BY SO MANY OF HER FANS. SHE MAY HAVE BEEN IN DISGUISE, BUT HER OVERFLOWING AURA GAVE HER AWAY.

OVER-FLOWING?

YES.

EVERY-
THING LOOKS
IN ORDER
TODAY.

THANK
YOU. HAVE
A GOOD
NIGHT.

IF
ANYTHING
HAPPENS,
PLEASE
CONTACT US
IMMEDI-
ATELY.

THEN
WE'LL BE
HEADING
OUT NOW,
HONOKA-
SAN.

19

新中華街

OH, MY...

IT'S YOU.

EX- EXCUSE ME.

KNOCK

KNOCK KNOCK

GOODNESS, IT'S ALMOST CLOSING TIME...

YOU'VE DISGUISED YOURSELF QUITE WELL TODAY...

PLEASE COME IN.

THANK YOU.

P-PLEASE, COUNT...

PLEASE HELP ME.

...HONOKA MISAKI-SAN.

I WANT TO...

NO.

SIMPLY PROTEC-TING ME ISN'T ENOUGH.

I SEE...

SO YOU'RE NOW IN NEED OF A BODYGUARD. SOMEONE WHO WILL PROTECT YOU WHEN YOU'RE AT YOUR MOST VULNERABLE.

I WANT TO KILL THEM. IN ONE FELL SWOOP.

ALL OF THE PETS AT MY SHOP ARE ELITE.

SURELY ONE OF THEM WILL MEET YOUR EXPECTA-TIONS.

PLEASE WAIT HERE A MOMENT.

MONEY IS NO OBJECT. I CAN PAY ANYTHING.

PLEASE LEAVE IT TO ME.

I WONDER WHOM I SHALL ASK THIS OF.

HMM...

ME, ME!

NO, FOR THIS YOU NEED SOMEONE DEPENDABLE... AND SADISTIC.

IF WE KILL FOR HONOKA-SAN, CAN WE EAT THE VICTIM?

GRRRR...

NOW, NOW... NO NEED TO OVERDO THINGS.

HOWEVER, JUST BEFORE CLOSING, OUR SECURITY CAMERAS RECORDED A CUSTOMER ENTERING COUNT D'S SHOP. AS OF YET, WE DON'T BELIEVE SHE'S LEFT.

I JUST WANTED TO INFORM YOU THAT ALL OF THE STORES EXCEPT THE RESTAURANTS AND BARS HAVE CLOSED FOR THE EVENING.

WHAT?!

IT'S PRETTY LATE, CHIN.

TAIZUU, DO YOU HAVE A MOMENT?

WHAT'S WRONG?

HUH?

OH... HOLD ON...

THAT'S KINDA SUSPICIOUS. SHOULD WE CHECK IT OUT?

I WONDER WHAT SORT OF PET SHE'S GOT IN THERE.

THAT'S AN AWFULLY BIG CAGE.

IT'S JUST AN OLD LADY.

THAT'S HER. IT LOOKS LIKE SHE'S LEAVING.

DON'T UNDER-ESTIMATE ME!

SORRY FOR BOTHERING YOU.

HMPH.

I WAS THINKING OF WATCHING "LOVE IS A FRIDAY VACATION" NEXT.

I SEE. WELL, TRY NOT TO OVERDO IT.

AH? UH, YEAH...

HUH. HAVE YOU BEEN WATCHING THIS THE WHOLE TIME?

I REMEMBER WHEN THIS SHOW WAS ON, BUT I'D NEVER SEEN IT. IT'S ABOUT A WOMAN WHO TAKES CONTROL OF A YAKUZA FAMILY. IT'S PRETTY GOOD.

STARTING TODAY, THIS WILL BE YOUR NEW HOME.

WE'RE HERE.

THAT'S AN AWFULLY BIG CAGE. I WONDER WHAT'S IN IT.

THIS PLACE IS TOO CROWDED AS IT IS.

ANOTHER NEW PET?

LIKE IT OR NOT, I THINK WE'RE ABOUT TO FIND OUT.

ハァ

AAAAAA!

WHAT IS THAT?

I'VE BEEN CALLING YOU FOR A WHILE NOW.

C-COUNT?!

C-

C-

OH! YOU'RE WATCHING A HONOKA MISAKI MOVIE.

I'M PRETTY SURE THAT'S THE ONLY HORROR FILM SHE'S EVER DONE.

SHE DOES?

DID YOU KNOW SHE HAS A STALKER?

ACTUALLY, I WANTED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT HONOKA-SAN.

Koff!

W-WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU...

...COUNT D?

WHICH ONE?

EX-HUSBAND...

UH...

IT'S BEEN IN THE TABLOIDS FOR AWHILE NOW.

A FEW WEEKS AGO THEY CAUGHT HER EX-HUSBAND TRYING TO GET INTO HER APARTMENT. THEY'RE PRETTY SURE HE'S THE CULPRIT.

THAT'S FUNNY. ACCORDING TO THE REPORT GIVEN TO US BY HER MANAGER, YOU SNUCK INTO HER APARTMENT AND SENT HER THREATENING CARDS.

THEY'VE ALSO SEEN YOU LURKING OUTSIDE HER FILM SHOOTS.

I'M TELLING YOU I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING!

Fujigaoka

Police Station

I WAS IN HOKKAIDO UNTIL YESTERDAY SHOOTING A MOVIE!

LIKE I SAID, I HAVE AN ALIBI!!

LET'S BE HONEST, TANAKA-SAN. YOU HAVE A PRETTY RECOGNIZABLE FACE. I'M SURE IF WE START ASKING AROUND, OTHER PEOPLE IN THE AREA ARE GOING TO REMEMBER SEEING IT.

I'LL TELL YOU WHO I FEEL SORRY FOR...ALL YOUR EX-WIVES AND GIRLFRIENDS. I'D IMAGINE SOME OF THEM MIGHT HOLD A MIGHTY GRUDGE AGAINST HONOKA.

THERE MUST BE A REASON, BECAUSE YOU'RE HARDLY THE ONLY GUY TO DO IT.

TELL ME, TANAKA, WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO THROW AWAY A HAPPY MARRIAGE, JUST TO BE HONOKA MISAKI'S LATEST FLIGHT OF FANCY, EH?

YEAH, THAT'S TRUE...

MAYBE WE'VE NABBED THE WRONG EX-HUSBAND. THERE ARE SO MANY OF YOU GUYS THAT I'VE LOST COUNT.

LOTS OF DRAMA IN YOUR LOVE LIFE, TANAKA. I HOPE IT'S BEEN WORTH IT.

...

MAYBE WE SHOULD BRING YOUR FIRST WIFE IN FOR QUESTIONING. OR IS SHE STILL IN THAT PADDED ROOM HER DOCTORS PUT HER IN AFTER SHE TRIED KILLING HERSELF?

MISAKI-SAN?!

WELL, IT HAD TO BE QUITE A SHOCK TO YOU. I'M MEAN, WHAT SORT OF MAN STALKS HIS EX-WIFE?

MAYBE IT'S NOT A MAN.

MAYBE IT'S--

I HEARD THEY FINALLY CAUGHT THE FREAK WHO'S BEEN HARASSING YOU, HONOKA-SAN.

WELL, THEY'RE NOT COMPLETELY CERTAIN IT WAS TANAKA. HE'S JUST UNDER SUSPICION.

.....

I'M COMING.

MISAKI-SAN!

WE'RE READY FOR YOUR NEXT SCENE.

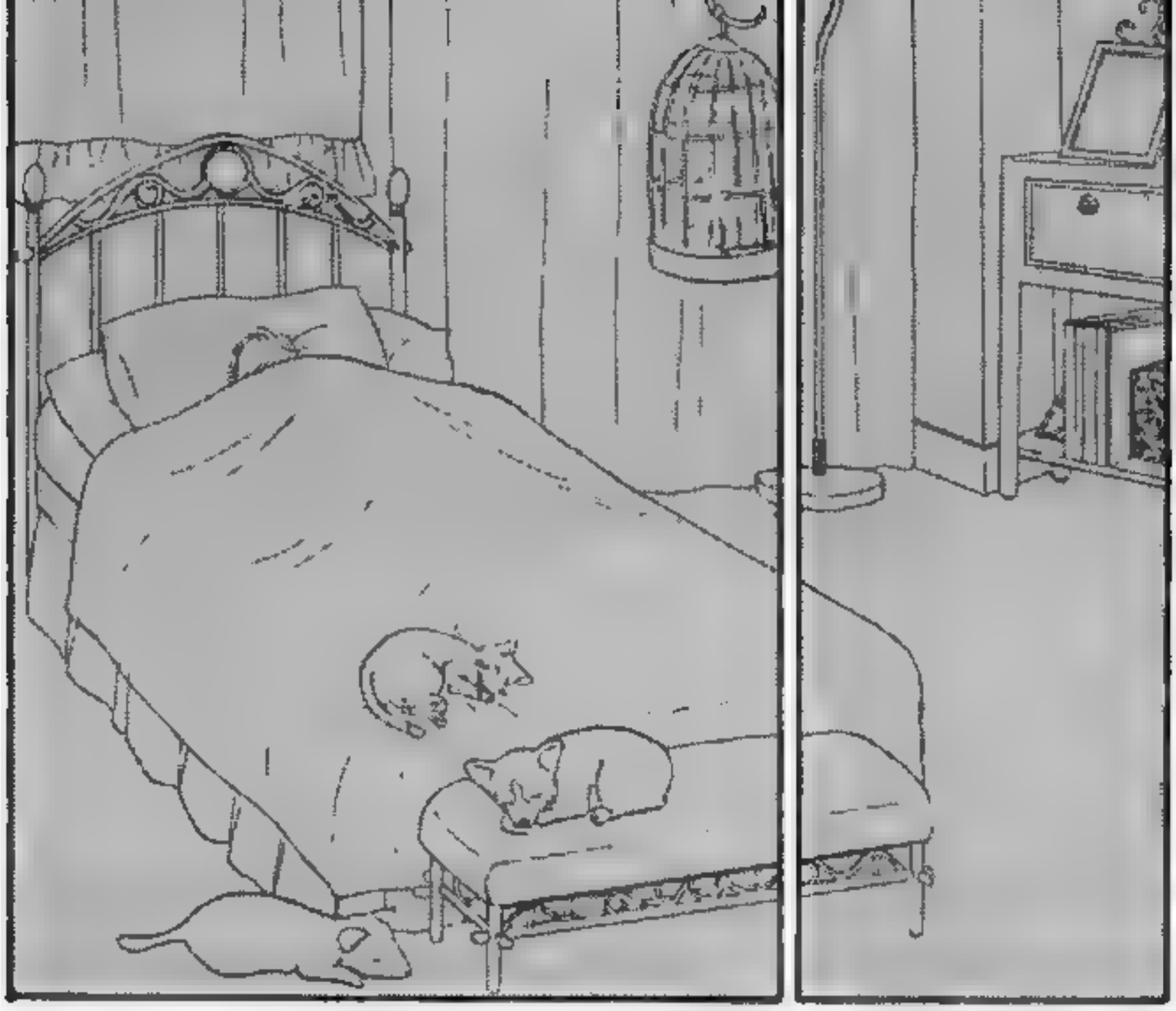
AH!

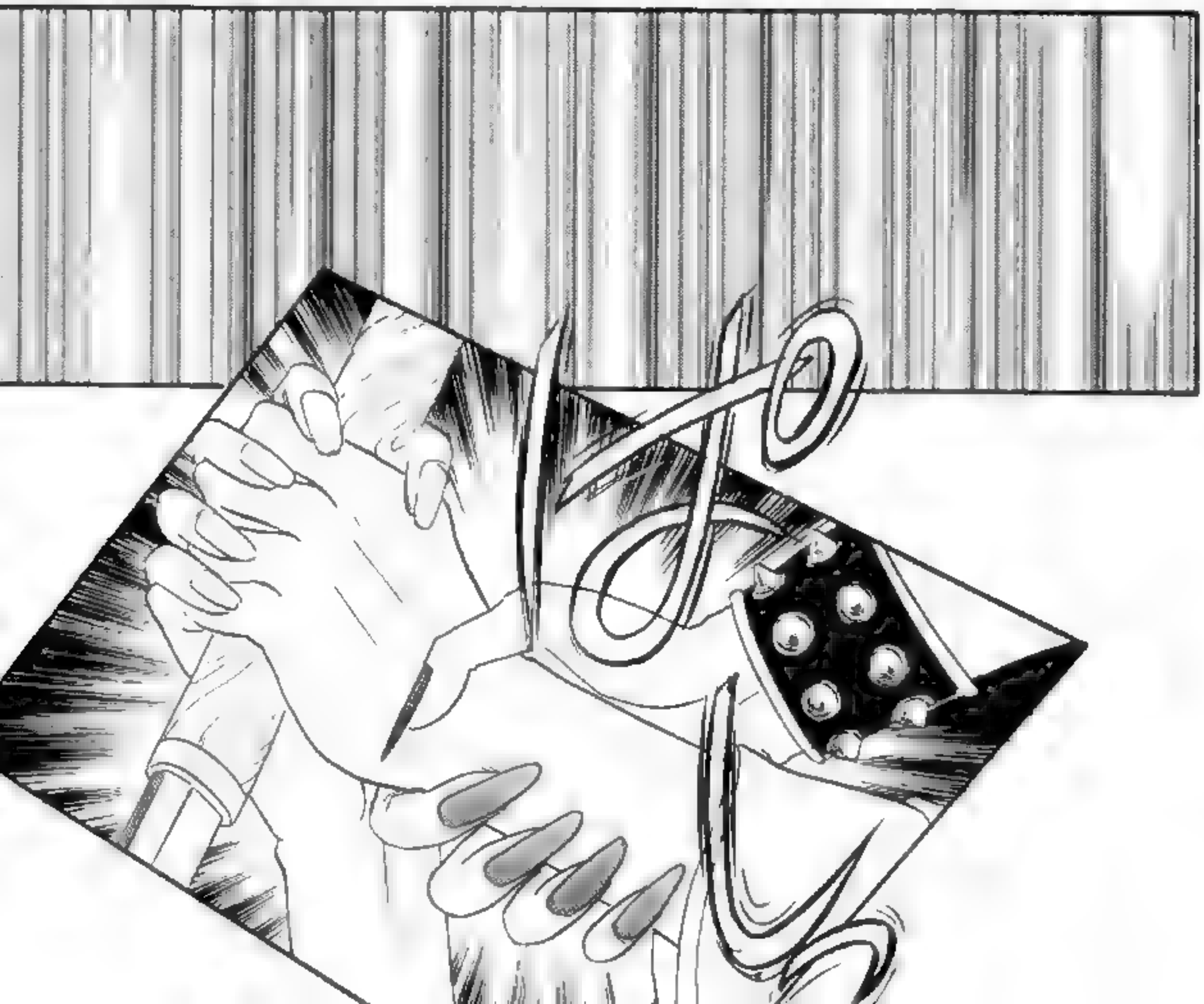
THAT IS WHAT YOU CALL A STAR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

HER PERSONAL LIFE'S GOING NUTS RIGHT NOW, BUT SHE REMAINS THE PINNACLE OF PROFESSIONALISM WHEN IT COMES TO HER ACTING.

HONOKA-SAN NEVER FAILS TO IMPRESS ME.

SHE'S THE DEFINING ACTRESS OF OUR TIME.





I'M A BODYGUARD.

I'M FOLLOWING MY ORDERS.

I WAS SENT FROM COUNT D'S PET SHOP.

WHO ARE YOU?!

?!

I APPRECIATE THAT YOU HAVE YOUR SIDE IN THIS MATTER, BUT...

...ORDERS ARE ORDERS.

I HOPE YOU DON'T HOLD THIS AGAINST ME. I'M JUST DOING WHAT MY MASTER WISHES.

GET OUT OF MY WAY, YOU FOOL!

THIS WOMAN IS A MONSTER AND SHE DESERVES TO DIE!

AAAAAAAAAA!

I'D FORGOTTEN HOW DELICIOUS THE FRESH ONES TASTE.

AH... ♡

DAMN!

PH.

WH-WHO ARE YOU?!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN HERE?!

SHH...

.....

AAAAH!

YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW DELICIOUS THEY ARE.

THERE'S NOTHING QUITE LIKE A FEARFUL FACE.

AND AS WE'VE SAID OVER AND OVER, HOW IS BREAKING AND ENTERING HER APARTMENT *HELPING* HONOKA MISAKI?

I JUST WANT TO HELP HER SOMEHOW!

I'M WORRIED ABOUT HER!

LIKE I'VE SAID OVER AND OVER AGAIN!

ANY GIRL WHO MAKES A HABIT OUT OF FALLING FOR MARRIED MEN OBVIOUSLY HAS SOME SORT OF SCREW LOOSE.

Heh heh!

YEAH, I'LL SAY SHE'S SICK.

MISAKI IS SICK.

.....

SICK?

THERE ISN'T A MAN LEFT ALIVE WHO'D ALLOW HIMSELF TO FALL IN LOVE WITH HONOKA MISAKI.

AND YOU THINK I DON'T KNOW THAT? JESUS CHRIST, YOU GUYS, GIVE ME SOME CREDIT!

FOR YEARS, MISAKI'S BEEN PRAISED FOR THE INTEGRITY AND DEPTH SHE BRINGS TO EACH OF HER ROLES. THEY SAY SHE FULLY EMBODIES HER CHARACTERS.

THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT.

HELL, IT'S ALL OVER THE TABLOIDS AND IT'S THE BUTT OF LATE NIGHT TV.

?!

...SHE ACTUALLY *BECOMES* EACH CHARACTER SHE PLAYS.

THE TRUTH IS THAT SHE DOESN'T JUST EMBODY THEM...

N Nurse?

I'LL BET YOU LIKED THAT, DIDN'T YOU, TANAKA? YOU'D GET TO TAKE A DIFFERENT WOMAN TO BED EACH NIGHT.

I'M NOT GOING TO DENY I LIKED IT. AT FIRST, I THOUGHT SHE WAS JUST PLAYING AROUND.

WELL, YES. HUH?

...SHE'D OFTEN ACT LIKE SOME OF HER OLD CHARACTERS.

WHEN WE WERE JUST MARRIED AND WE HAD A LITTLE BIT TO DRINK...

...A TOUGH FEMALE DETECTIVE, OR AN INSANE KILLER.

IT DOESN'T MATTER IF IT'S AN INNOCENT NURSE, A CLUMSY STEWARDESS...

Heh.

Heh.

Heh.

AT FIRST, I THOUGHT THAT SHE WAS JUST PRACTICING HER ACTING.

Heh heh...

Ha'

Yes, really.

IS THAT A GUEST?

BUT ONE DAY...

...WHEN I CAME HOME EARLIER THAN EXPECTED FROM A SHOOT...

...I ENTERED THE HOUSE VERY QUIETLY. I WANTED TO SURPRISE HER, YOU SEE.

ALL OF THEM. EVERY SINGLE CHARACTER SHE'S ACTED IN THE PAST...

...IS STILL LIVING WITHIN HER.

I CAN'T FOCUS WHEN YOU'RE AROUND.

GET LOST! WE DON'T WANT YOU HERE!

AW, MAN!

WAY TO DRAG DOWN THE PARTY!

...THAT HONOKA MISAKI HAS... MULTIPLE PERSON-ALITIES?

THEN... WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS...

...AND WHEN TO KEEP QUIET. WHILE SHE'S WORKING, THE ONLY CHARACTER SHE PLAYS IS THAT OF THE ACTRESS. AND SHE PLAYS IT PERFECTLY.

THE CHARACTERS ALL KNOW WHEN TO EMERGE...

BUT A DISEASE LIKE THAT WOULD AFFECT HER DAILY LIFE. HER FRIENDS, AGENT AND MANAGER WOULD ALL KNOW ABOUT IT.

IMPOS-SIBLE. I AIN'T NO EXPERT, CAPTAIN.

IN FRONT OF HER MOTHER, MISAKI ALWAYS PLAYED THE ROLE OF A CHILD.

I READ ABOUT THAT. THEY WERE CLOSE?

HER MOTHER PASSED AWAY LAST YEAR.

IT'S WHEN SHE'S ALONE...

...A RARE TIME FOR AN ACTOR...

...THAT SHE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT ROLE TO ACT.

AND WHEN SHE WAS WITH ME, SHE PLAYED THE ROLE OF A WIFE.

...SHE STOPS PLAYING HER CHARACTERS AND THEY START PLAYING **HER**.

THAT'S WHEN...

KILL ME

I LIKE A GIRL WITH SOME BITE!

YOU ARE REALLY STARTING TO PISS ME OFF, MAN!

UNFORTUNATELY, THOUGH...MY BITE'S BETTER.

Huff!

Huff!

SNIFF!

SOB!

HIC!

EVEN I ALMOST THOUGHT THOSE TEARS WERE REAL.

MY, MY. WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT YOU IS TRUE. YOU *ARE* A GOOD ACTRESS!

I HAVE A SUG-GESTION.

LET ME TRY SOMETHING ELSE.

YOU KNEW I WAS FAKING?

HOW... I WANT?

YOU SHOULD LIVE HOW YOU WANT TO LIVE.

FROM NOW ON, YOU SHOULD CRY LIKE YOU WANT TO CRY.

AND LAUGH LIKE YOU WANT TO LAUGH.

YES, BUT YOUR MOM ISN'T HERE ANYMORE, IS SHE?

AND HOW MY MOM WANTS ME TO. IF I DO IT RIGHT, THEY ALL COMPLIMENT ME.

AND HOW THE TEACHER WANTS ME TO.

I NEED TO DO IT HOW THE DIRECTOR WANTS ME TO.

I DON'T KNOW...I...

...DON'T HAVE A SCRIPT.

WHAT'S YOUR REAL DREAM?

TO BECOME A GREAT ACTRESS.

BECAUSE MY DREAM IS TO FULFILL MY MOMMY'S DREAM.

to be continued

SORRY...

...BUT THAT DREAM'S NOT GOING TO CUT IT ANYMORE.

IT DOESN'T MATTER.

...THAT HONOKA MISAKI, THE GIFTED YOUNG ACTRESS, WILL HAVE TO RETIRE.

ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS?

TO KILL ALL THE OTHERS WITHIN YOU... YOU REALIZE THAT MEANS...

I'M AT THE POINT WHERE I DON'T KNOW WHO I AM ANYMORE.

I'M ALREADY TIRED.

THAT SOUNDS WONDERFUL.

WILL YOU INVITE ME FOR TEA SOMETIME?

MY DREAM WAS TO OPEN A SMALL CAFÉ.

...I...

WHEN I WAS LITTLE, I WANTED TO BECOME A BAKER.

OH...WAIT A MINUTE. I-I REMEMBER...

OF COURSE IT'S NOT.

I WONDER IF IT'S STILL NOT TOO LATE.

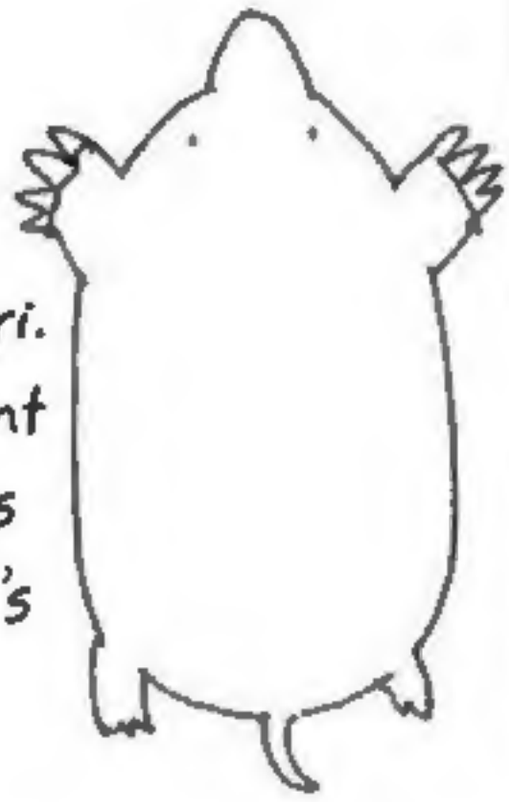
AND WHEN YOU RESTART YOUR LIFE...

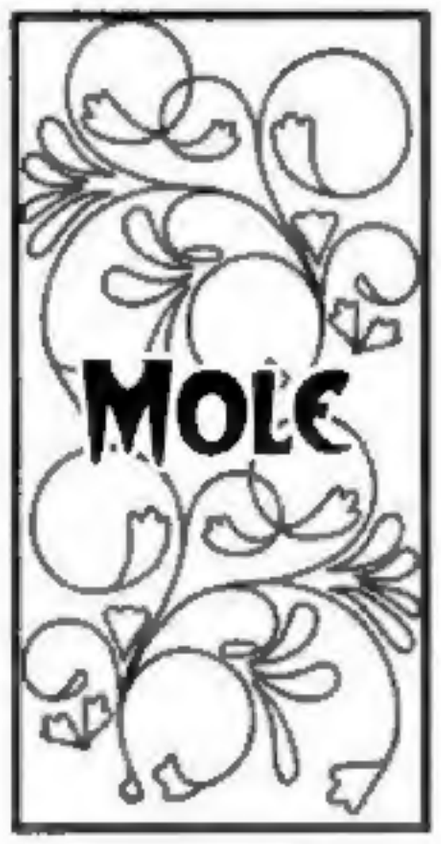
...YOUR NEW PET WILL ALWAYS BE WITH YOU.

STORY 14 END

Pet catalog

Okay, now, everyone together.
"So they were moles?!"





Hmm. This is Akino, who always seems to be pushed into a corner. My name is read Matsuri. Why, hello! Currently, there are seven different types of moles in Japan. The two main species are the Kantou's Azuma Mole and the Kansai's Kobe Mole. Kobe moles are a bit bigger.

You shouldn't think that moles will "die if they see the sun." In the past they WERE called "himizu," (translation= "those that do not see light" -ed.) but this is a myth. Because they work underground, their eyes have deteriorated, but they can recognize light from dark. During the day, if they come out to the surface, they're often attacked by crows and cats. By the way, there IS a stuffed Japanese wolf at the Leiden University in the Netherlands. There are some theories that it's just a mountain dog.

Like the name says, it's a cat with black, white and brown patches of fur. You cannot breed a calico by just mixing a white and black cat with a brown cat. (I don't really know why this is. I'm pretty sure the explanation is very complicated and involves DNA.) Because of this, the chances of a calico male being born is 1 in 30,000. In the past, they kept them on ships as a protection against shipwrecks.

Most of the squirrels that live in Japan do not hibernate, but the chipmunks in cold areas do. When they hibernate, their body temperature drops by 5 degrees C and their heartbeat slows, making them appear to be dead. They actually don't sleep all the way until spring. They wake up every now and then to eat or go to the bathroom. If you keep the room warm, a chipmunk won't hibernate. Modern scientists have studied the blood from sleeping chipmunks to research insomnia and life extension.

A chipmunk's tail looks shabby.

The species of the foxes found at the Shinto shrine is unknown.

Their eyes move independently of each other.

Their claws make it easy to grab tree branches.

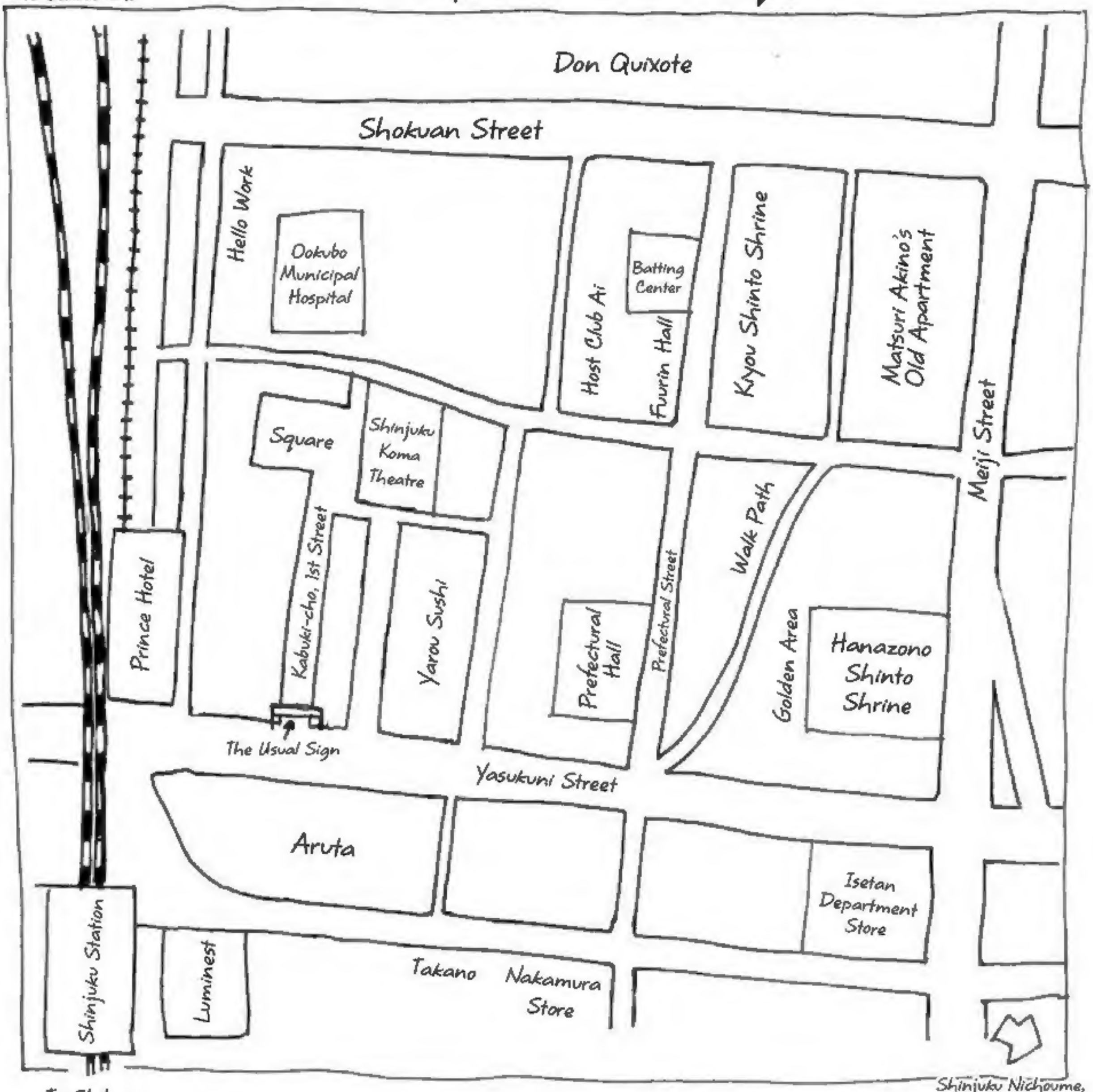
And they have a cute tail!

I'd intended this lizard to look like a color-changing chameleon, but as I worked on this one, I realized he looked more like an iguana. During the close up of the chameleon's eyes, I wasn't able to draw it as cool as I wanted to. It looks pretty haphazard. The character looks like a bad guy from that Power Rangers show...

THE MAGIC KABUKI-CHO

1ST VERSION!

Below I've drawn a simple map of Kabuki-cho, the area where Pet Shop of Horrors: Tokyo takes place. I've tried to include all the spots that Count D frequents.



Hanazono Shinto Shrine is on the side of Meiji Street in Story 13. There are lots of stray cats nearby. Even in the daytime, the path is dark. In Story 8 of Volume 3, the patients went to Ookubo Hospital. On the side of Shokuan Street, there is a Korean store and restaurants, making the area a small Koreatown. In Story 9, also in Volume 3, the jellyfish woman was in the square of the Shinjuku Koma Theatre.

IN OUR NEXT VOLUME...

Count D is facing his biggest dilemma ever...all the local stores are sold out of sweets! Will he be able to feed his unrelenting sweet tooth in time? And when one of his customers takes the wrong item from the pet shop, Count D will have to rely on Woo-Fei for help. But will it come at a price?

All this and Count D in an MRI machine! Don't miss it!

Volume 5 of Pet Shop of Horrors: Tokyo is coming your way in August, 2009!